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LETTERS ON ENGLAND.

BY

LOUIS BLANC.

SECOND SERIES.

TRANSLATED BY

JAMES HUTTON AND L. J. TROTTER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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LETTERS ON ENGLAND.

LETTER CXXV.

THE "TIMES."

February 14th, 1863.

THE *Times!* That is to say, one of the most singular products of modern times, one of the phenomena of the phase of civilisation on which we have entered. What a formidable power is that of the *Times!* A nobody—you, he, I,—has only to keep in the dark and wield the pen of the *Times* to prevent a potentate from sleeping.

You have heard of the book published by Mr. Kinglake, "The Invasion of the Crimea?" The manner in which the author therein describes the birth of the *Times*, its development, and its influence upon England, is curious from more than one point of view. Your readers, perhaps, may thank me for placing before them the following passage:—

"Long before the outbreak of the war there were living, in some of the English counties, certain widows and gentlemen, who were the depositories of a power destined to exercise a great sway over the conduct of the war. Their ways were peaceful, and they were not perhaps more turned towards politics than other widows and country gentlemen, but by force of deeds and testaments, by force of births, deaths, and marriages, they had become the members of an ancient firm or company which made it its business to collect and disseminate news. They had so much good sense of the worldly sort, that instead of struggling with one another for the control of their powerful engine, they remained quietly at their homes, and engaged some active and gifted men to manage the concern for them in London. The practice of the Company was to issue a paper daily, containing an

account of what was going on in the world, together with letters from men of all sorts and conditions, who were seeking to bring their favourite subjects under the eye of the public, and also a few short essays upon the topics of the day. Likewise, upon paying the sum required by the Company, any person could cause whatever he chose to be inserted in the paper as an 'advertisement,' and the sheet containing these four descriptions of matter was sold to the public at a low rate.

"Extraordinary enterprise was shown by the Company in the gathering of intelligence; and during the wars following the French Revolution, they caused their despatches from the Continent to reach them so early that they were able to forestall the government of the day. In other countries the spectacle of a government outdone in this way by private enterprise would have seemed a scandal; but the Englishman liked the thought that he could buy and bring to his own home as much knowledge as was in the hands of a Minister of State, and he enjoyed the success of his fellow-countrymen in their rivalry with the government. From this time the paper gathered strength. It became the foremost journal of the world; and this was no sooner the case than the mere fact of its being thus foremost gave a great acceleration to its rise, for, simply because it was recognised as the most public of prints, it became the clue with which anxious man went seeking in the maze of the busy world for the lost, and the unknown, and all that was beyond his own reach. The prince who was claiming a kingdom, the servant who wanted a place, the mother who had lost her boy, they all went thither. Thither Folly ran hurrying, and was brought to a wholesome parley with Wisdom. Thither went righteous anger. Thither also went hatred and malice. And not in vain was all this concourse; for either the troubled and angry men got the discipline of finding that the world would not listen to their cries, or else they gained a vent for their passions, and brought all their theories to a test by calling a whole nation—nay, by calling the civilised world—to hearken and be their witness. Over all this throng of appellants men unknown sat in judgment, and—violently, perhaps, but never corruptly—a rough sort of justice was done. The style which Oriental hyperbole used to give to the Sultan might be claimed with more colour of truth by the journal. In a sense it was the 'asylum of the world.'

"Still, up to this point the Company occupied ground in com-

mon with many other speculators, and if they had gone no further, it would not have been my province to notice the result of their labours. But many years ago it had occurred to the manager of the Company that there was one important article of news which had not been effectually supplied. It seemed likely that, without moving from his fireside, an Englishman would be glad to know what the bulk of his fellow-countrymen thought upon the uppermost questions of the day. The letters received from correspondents furnished some means of acquiring this knowledge, and it seemed to the managers of the Company that at some pains and at a moderate cost it would be possible to ascertain the opinions which were coming into vogue, and see the direction in which the current would flow. It is said that with this intent they many years ago employed a shrewd, idle clergyman, who made it his duty to loiter about in places of common resort and find out what people thought upon the principal subjects of the time. He was not to listen very much to extreme foolishness, and still less was he to hearken to clever people. His duty was to wait and wait until he observed that some common and obvious thought was repeated in many places, and by numbers of men who had probably never seen one another. That one common thought was the prize he sought for, and he carried it home to his employers. He became so skilled in his peculiar calling that, as long as he served them, the Company was rarely misled; and although in later times they were frequently baffled in their pursuit of this kind of knowledge, they never neglected to do what they could to search the heart of the nation.

"When the managers had armed themselves with the knowledge thus gathered, they prepared to disseminate it, but they did not state boldly what they had ascertained to be the opinion of the country. Their method was as follows:—They employed able writers to argue in support of the opinion which, as they believed, the country was already adopting, and, supposing that they had been well informed, their arguments of course fell upon willing ears. Those who had already formed a judgment saw their own notions stated and pressed with an ability greater than they could themselves command; and those who had not yet come to an opinion were strongly moved to do so, when they saw the path taken by a Company which notoriously strove to follow the changes of the public mind. The report which the paper gave of the opinion formed by the public was so closely blended

with arguments in support of that same opinion, that he who looked at the paper merely to know what other people thought, was seized as he read by the cogency of the reasoning; and on the other hand, he who imagined that he was being governed by the force of sheer logic, was merely obeying a guide who, by telling him that the world was already agreed, made him go and flock along with his fellows: for as the utterance of a prophecy is sometimes a main step towards its fulfilment, so a rumour asserting that multitudes have already adopted a given opinion will often generate that very concurrence of thought which was prematurely declared to exist. From the operation of this double process it resulted of course that the opinion of the English public was generally in accord with the writings of the Company; and the more the paper came to be regarded as a true exponent of the national mind, the more vast was the publicity which it obtained.

"Plainly then this Printing Company wielded a great power; and if I have written with sufficient clearness, I have made it apparent that this was a power of more vast dimensions than that which men describe when they speak of 'the power of the press.' It is one thing, for instance, to denounce a public man by printed arguments and invectives which are believed to utter nothing more than the opinion of the writers, and it is another and a graver thing to denounce him in writings which, though having the form of arguments, are (rightly or wrongly), regarded as manifestoes—as manifestoes declaring the judgment of the English people. In the one case the man is only accused. In the other he seems to stand already condemned.

"But though the Company held all this power, their tenure of it was of such a kind that they could not exercise it perversely or whimsically without doing a great harm to their singular trade; for the whole scheme of their existence went to make them—not autocratic, but—representative in their character, and they were obliged by the law of their being to keep themselves as closely as they could in accord with the nation at large.

"This then was the great English journal; and, whether men spoke of the mere printed sheet which lay upon their table, or of the mysterious organization which produced it, they habitually called either one or the other 'The Times.' Moreover they often prefixed to the word such adjectives and participles as showed that they regarded the subject of their comments in the light of a sen-

tient active being, having a life beyond the span of mortal men, gifted with reason, armed with a cruel strength, endued with some of the darkest of the human passions, but clearly liable hereafter to the direst penalty of sin.*

"On the Sabbath, England had rest, but in the early morning of all other days the irrevocable words were poured forth and scattered abroad to the corners of the earth, measuring out honour to some, and upon others bringing scorn and disgrace. Where and with whom the real power lay, and what was its true source, and how it was to be propitiated,—these were questions wrapped in more or less obscurity; for some had a theory that one man ruled, and some another, and some were sure that the Great Newspaper governed all England, and others that England governed the Newspaper. Philosophic politicians traced events to what they called 'public opinion.' With almost the same meaning women and practical men simply spoke of 'The Times.'"—*Kinglake's Invasion of the Crimea,* Vol. ii., pp. 78—84.

The manner in which Mr. Kinglake relates the birth and development of the *Times* is very ingenious; but in my opinion the description he gives of this matchless paper is somewhat overloaded. Mr. Kinglake seems to me to have looked at the *Times* under its least favourable aspect.

I admit that the *Times* concentrates the force and directs the blows of the despotism which is adorned by the fine title of "Public Opinion;" but I cannot allow that this is done for purely commercial ends. I am aware that centralisation, driven from everywhere else into England, has there built itself an impregnable fortress in the realm of thought, but I cannot agree that the object of this is simply to secure the success of an industrial enterprise. The reign of Common Place has no need, in order to be transformed into tyranny, to be organized as an affair of pounds, shillings, and pence. It would be too bad were the destiny of the world to depend, however partially, upon the

* The form of speech which thus impersonates a manufactory and its wares has now so obtained in our language that—discarding the forcible epithets—one may venture to adopt it in writing, and to give the *Times* the same place in grammatical construction as though it were the proper name of an angel or a hero, a devil or a saint, or a sinner already condemned. Custom makes it good English to say, "The *Times* will protect him;" "The *Times* is savage;" "The *Times* is crushing him;" "The blessed *Times* has put the thing right;" "That d——d *Times* has done all the mischief."

nature of the speculation undertaken by Messrs. So-and-So and Co.

It is perfectly true that the *Times* derives from its industrial resources the means of extending and maintaining its political influence. I remember having heard the manager of this extraordinary journal declare that it lost money by the advertisements, through the numerous supplements that were required for them. This statement so surprised me that I exclaimed, "Why, then, does the *Times* publish advertisements, if it be true that they cause it a loss?" "Let us understand one another," was the reply. "The advertisements bring nothing to the *Times* in the way of money, but they pay enormously in the way of influence and reputation."

In fact, the *Times* has become for everybody a sort of necessity, through the imposing publicity which, on payment, it places at the disposal of every interest, of every want, even of every caprice. Thanks to it, supply and demand give each other the hand, whatever distance may seem to separate them. It has, every day, an answer all ready to be tendered to the *paterfamilias* who asks to what school he shall send his children; to the mistress of the house who wishes to know where, and at what price, she can procure the article of furniture of which she is in search; to the teachers who are looking out for pupils, and to the pupils who are looking out for teachers; to people inquiring for employment; to servants in want of situations. The *Times* is a matchless treasure-house of information of every kind. It is more than that,—it is a medium of correspondence in the power of every one who is in a position to pay sixpence for a line of print. How many rendezvous have been arranged in the columns of the *Times* in preconcerted terms of mystery! How often has its publicity served to prepare meetings, the secret of which was known neither to itself nor to the public!

And the grievances, to which the *Times* lends a voice, ay, a sonorous voice! And the protests, of which it is the powerful echo! And the thousand petty abuses, which vanish as soon as it denounces them!

It is just, also, to remark that the *Times* is indebted to the formidable position it occupies for its power to protect the public against the encroachments of the authorities, and against pretensions which it alone is capable of effectually suppressing, and without a thought for the social distinction of the personages taken

to task. I remember having read, in the *Times*, articles of terrible severity touching a certain nobleman who was compromised in a scandalous law-case; and the fashion in which, upon a certain occasion, it undertook to lecture the Consort of the Queen, shows clearly enough that for the *Times* no adversary is placed too high.

That the *Times* is edited with much brilliance, that on every given question it employs the pen not only of a talented man, but of a man with a special talent; that it maintains, at every point of the globe, correspondents,—I had almost said, ambassadors,—and that it is better informed on foreign affairs than many foreign offices, is not all to be wondered at; all this is explained by its wealth and its intelligent liberality.

Thus it follows that the English have for the *Times* a weakness of which they cannot get rid. Among themselves they take pleasure in abusing the "leading journal;" they readily find fault with its frequent change of tactics; they will even go so far, in a moment of bad humour, as to describe it as an unprincipled paper. But at heart they are proud of an organ which is without its peer in the whole world. It wants but little that some of them should regard the *Times* as, so to speak, identified in the eyes of Europe with the greatness of England. When they speak of the *Times* to a foreigner, it is with a tone of satisfied pride, precisely as when they speak of the superior merit of English institutions. The very dimensions of the *Times* flatter the sentiment of national vanity. It is with a smile of triumph on the lips that they compare this giant of journals to the dwarfish sheets of other countries, and they puff themselves out as they tell you, when they are travelling abroad, that the *Times* sells 60,000 copies a day, and strikes off 12,000 in the hour. The confidence with which it inspires the public on certain points is so great, that at the time of the Crimean war it was entrusted, implicitly, with the employment and distribution of more than £10,000, the amount of donations made for the purpose of sending succour to the army. The responsibility was a heavy one. On the 12th of February, 1855, money continuing to pour in from all sides, the *Times* grew weary of its functions of benevolent banker, and announced that, beyond £5000 more, it would not receive anything, and on the morrow the £5000 were paid in to its account!

Its influence, however, has now and then received a rude

shock. More than one important measure might be quoted which has been adopted without its aid, or rather in spite of, and in opposition to it. What a clamour, for instance, it raised, and all to no purpose, against the reform introduced into the fiscal system of the transmission of newspapers through the post! Had it rested with the *Times* to baffle the efforts of Messrs. Cobden, Bright, and Milner Gibson in favour of the cheap press, it may be reasonably inferred that no penny papers would be in existence. They do exist, for all that, and prosper. The circulation of the *Morning Star* is very considerable, that of the *Standard* really great, that of the *Daily Telegraph* immense. Besides, the action of the "leading journal" is, in some measure, replaced in the provinces by the action of the local papers, some of which are conducted with great ability. What matter! All that does not prevent the *Times* from exercising a sovereign power. The penny papers may dispute the street with it; but for that very reason, in this realm of respectability, they are forced to yield precedence to it in the drawing-room. And then, such is the prestige of the *Times* that the same news, the same protest, the same descriptive narrative, enjoy in its columns an importance which they would not possess in the columns of other journals. Is there any man of letters who does not deem it good fortune to have attracted the attention of the *Times?* Can any wound be inflicted by the *Times* without risk of its proving mortal?

It remains to be inquired whether the *Times* does not threaten as many perils as it renders services. To be candid, I fear so.

In the first place, the *Times* is conducted in a spirit with which generous and impulsive natures cannot in any way sympathise. Every question is treated by it from a point of view narrowly practical, and with a sort of dread of all that implies originality of apprehension, elevation of thought, or loftiness of sentiment. In its foreign policy the *Times* is always English, profoundly English, but it is only that, and nothing more. Do not ask of it to feel any emotion in favour of an oppressed people, if the deliverance of that people has no obvious connection with the interests of England. Do not ask of it to wage war against despotism with vigour and perseverance, if the despotism which it is proposed to attack crushes a nation which England is not interested in defending. Occasionally liberal with regard to home affairs, the *Times* is essentially conservative in all that concerns

foreign affairs. There is no paper which plumes itself less on its chivalrous disposition; no paper which takes more precautions against falling into the snare of a sentimental policy. If a sentimental policy, however, has its inconveniences, are there none in the preponderance of a diametrically opposite policy?

In yet another respect the enormous influence of the *Times*—an influence, the excess of which is denied and endured by every one—deserves to be attentively examined.

It is, undoubtedly, very important that the freedom of the press should be guaranteed against the possible injustice of the government; but it is also important that the honour of each individual citizen should be guaranteed against the possible injustice of the press. But how is it in England? You are attacked by a newspaper, and you reply to that unfounded attack. Is the insertion of your reply in the journal that unjustly assailed you, obligatory? By no means. If your justification is inserted,—and I hasten to acknowledge, to the honour of English journalists, that such is usually the case,—you have to thank the fairness of your adversary; for the law prescribes nothing whatever in such a case, and your honour is so far at his mercy. In this state of things what could an individual do to defend himself, if the *Times* were determined to crush him? Who does not perceive that, under such circumstances, what is called the freedom of the press might serve to cover the most formidable of all the shapes of despotism?

And if to this privilege of rejecting, whenever it pleases, a reply provoked by its agression, there be added the power conferred upon a journal by anonymity, what can be imagined more alarming?

A man lies concealed behind a bush. You pass by. He aims at your heart. You are hit. Who fired? You have not the right to know. Who is answerable for the act? Nobody.

It is true that the system of anonymity gives the press a considerable prestige, and that there is something quite irresistible in the influence exercised over the imaginations of men by that invisible, impalpable personage, the *Times*. But there, precisely, lies the danger.

As to the habit the *Times* has of changing its opinion according to circumstances, the English are accustomed to find this excuse for it, that it was established in order to reflect the ever-changing phases of public opinion, as the sea reflects the varying aspects of

the heavens. To my thinking, this is only true in part, and much less so than people choose to believe.

The *Times*, in reality, represents public opinion only because it forms it, and this power of forming it is given by the notion, so widely spread, that it merely represents it. The *Times* is far from being a tribune, access to which is open to all. It is a laboratory, in which a few men of great ability, profoundly versed in the knowledge of the English character, and always starting from a narrow point of view, which is called a practical one, work up the materials of which the circulation of thought is composed in England. What a strange phenomenon is that! Every morning England admires herself in a newspaper, in which she is delighted to see herself in full dress, without ever suspecting that the mirror has marvellously contributed to the creation of the image which it reflects. How many individuals there are, who take what is really the voice of the *Times* for the echo of their own voice, and fancy that they think what it thinks for them!

LETTER CXXVI.

THE INCOME OF THE PRINCE OF WALES.

February 21*st*, 1863.

Courage! Let Poland take heart! Her cause, which is that of justice and humanity, will not this time remain without defenders. Is Heaven too high? Is France too distant? We shall see. In the meantime England has spoken out. The very ends of the world will ring again with the words in which, yesterday, in the House of Lords, the indignation of Lord Ellenborough burst forth. And Lord Russell? With what haughty disdain of diplomatic circumlocution did he describe the acts of violence which have driven unhappy Poland to despair! With what pain —to allow one's feelings to be guessed is better sometimes than to express them—did he denounce the conduct of the King of Prussia, hunting down his fellow-men to give pleasure to the Czar! England will clap her hands over such language, over such a straightforward policy. Lord Malmesbury, in the name of the Conservative party, has already given vent to the consternation with which his soul is overwhelmed. The *Times*, which is

not easily aroused to emotion, the *Times* itself, in speaking of St. Petersburgh, and still more so in speaking of Berlin, growls and threatens. But I will say no more on this subject, presuming that you will reproduce in your columns the very important speech of Earl Russell, who, Heaven be praised, says enough about it. What commentary is possible in the presence of such a text?

What happened the day before yesterday in the House of Commons is, perhaps, less likely to fix your attention. I will, therefore, take it up in preference, and all the more readily because it also, though in a less degree, furnishes matter for reflection to those who go to the bottom of things.

The subject of discussion was the forthcoming marriage of the Prince of Wales.

What a strange thing! In asking for this Prince an annual grant of £40,000 and, in addition, an annual grant of £10,000 for the princess who is about to become his consort, Lord Palmerston astonished both the House of Commons and the nation. What! So little! Such is the exclamation which has risen to every lip. Mr. Disraeli exactly expressed the general sentiment when he said: "No one will think this too much; let us hope that it will be sufficient."

What does this mean? Is it that the Prince of Wales, if the nation refused to assist him, would be reduced to a mere competent allowance? Not at all. Unlike his brothers and sisters, the Prince of Wales has a fortune of his own, and of a considerable amount. He enjoys an income of £16,000 a year from the public funds; he draws the rents of an estate recently purchased, and the revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall, which did not exceed £12,000 at the commencement of the present reign, but which now, thanks to the admirable management of the late Prince Albert, are estimated at not less than £40,000.

The question, then, was to ascertain whether, seeing that the heir-presumptive to the Crown already enjoyed an income of very nearly £60,000 a year, it was advisable to raise this income to £100,000.

Well, there was not the shadow of a doubt thrown upon the proposition. Only one member of the House, Mr. Augustus Smith, without a word about excess, made the remark that the young prince already figured among men of large fortunes; that his travels in America had been paid for him, and that, after all,

he could very well dispense with the munificence of Parliament. With this exception, and the timid expression of some regret that ministers had not thought proper to lay before the House the account current of the Duchy of Cornwall with all necessary vouchers, Lord Palmerston's motion had no opposition to vanquish. The grant was voted unanimously, and as unanimously approved by the public. Never has a Bill of Exchange, drawn by the ministers of a sovereign, been accepted with greater pleasure by any people.

How is this phenomenon to be explained? Does not England, already bowed down beneath the weight of taxation, hold taxes in horror? Does not the popularity of an English minister frequently depend upon his readiness to cut down the salaries of public servants, and to reduce the heads of expenditure? Is not the "policy of retrenchment," as it is here called, that which speaks to the heart of the nation? Whence comes it then, that there is no exaggeration in the following assertion of the *Times*:—"If the English people were gathered together and consulted, and it was explained to each individual the portion he would have to contribute to the £40,000 per annum offered to the Prince of Wales, we are certain there would be only one voice among the English, for giving to their prince twice as much as the sum unanimously voted last night."

It is needless to look far for the solution of such a problem. The mystery is simply this, England does not belong to *her* princes; on the contrary, *her* princes belong to her. They know it, and she knows it. She is quite aware that what she gives to them, she gives to herself. She takes pride in their splendour, because their splendour can never be regarded as anything more than the reflection of her own. If it be her pleasure that her future king, even previous to his ascending the throne, should not be eclipsed by any one; that he should be in a position to be generous without embarrassment; that he should have the means of liberally patronising the arts; that he should live as comfortably as the wealthiest of country gentlemen; that, in short, he should take his proper place among nobles whose incomes are reckoned by hundreds of thousands; it is because she is armed with the power of preventing her munificence from being turned against herself. A short time ago the Prince of Wales was out shooting, when his sport was interrupted by the refusal of a farmer to desist from his labours to oblige his Royal Highness.

The young man lost his temper. What happened? On the morrow the *Morning Star* gave him a severe lecture. Since he was destined to reign over the English, it was well for him to be warned beforehand that every man is master of his own house and home. How valuable is eulogy in a country where censure flies so high? How can any suspicion of servile adulation attach to the eagerness of a people to enrich princes whom it is free to rebuke, when necessary, after so rude a fashion?

But does not the exercise of such liberty run some risk of descending to defamation? Or what does a nation gain by forgetting to pay due reverence?

Here is my answer: The citizens of London looked forward to beholding in London itself the celebration of the marriage of the Prince of Wales. Shop-keepers, dress-makers, costermongers, dealers of high and low degree, vendors of everything or anything, had built upon this expectation a thousand castles in the air. The capital of England, said they, was about to overflow with wealthy visitors—gold would be scattered with lavish hands. Imagine their disappointment when it was known that, by the Queen's command, the marriage was to be celebrated in Windsor Castle! That this decision caused dissatisfaction to many persons—that it gave rise to some whisperings as to the duty imposed upon sovereigns of suppressing their personal feelings where public interests are concerned—I do not pretend to deny; but it is worthy of remark that not a murmur was raised loud enough to be heard at Windsor, and that not a single newspaper permitted a bitter word, or even an unpleasant allusion to appear. The Queen is in mourning, and they love their Queen—it needed no more to constrain every man to hold his peace. They could have spoken out, however, had they pleased, without fear of police, magistrates, or gendarmes!

To return to the grant voted for the Prince of Wales: it would avail him little in this country, were he ignorant of the fact that money alone is impotent to gain the hearts of men; that it needs graciousness of manner, goodness of soul, the practice of domestic virtues, in a word, all that cannot be conferred by the people upon those who govern them.

He will also have to bear in mind that, in England it is expected of princes that they should spend in proportion to what they receive in rewarding faithful servants, in succouring the necessitous, and in compensating merit for the injustice of fortune.

It must be confessed that this has not always been the conduct of the predecessors of the young prince in question, and the history of his house will furnish him with many examples as warnings. Who, for instance, can have forgotten the scandalous life of George IV. when he was Prince of Wales? In common justice, however, it must be acknowledged that the fêtes at Carlton House were not solely indebted for their celebrity to the display of a vain and ruinous magnificence. What an attraction must have proved the wit of Selwyn and of Sheridan, the irrepressible gaiety of Hare, the sallies of Curran, the nervous eloquence of Erskine, the genius of Fox, the admirable beauty of Mrs. Crewe, that goddess of the Whig party of those days, and the ineffable grace of that charming Duchess of Devonshire, the first of the great ladies of England who ever suckled her own children! Such was the brilliant side of the medal—but the opposite side! It is impossible at the present time to pronounce the words, "Prince of Wales," without straightway conjuring up the lover of Mrs. Mary Robinson, the equivocal husband of Mrs. Fitzherbert, holding out his hand to the nation to the last, and without a pause calling upon the House of Commons to pay his debts, at one time through Fox, at another through Alderman Newnham; reduced to shutting up Carlton House after having, so to speak, thrown open its doors to the whole world; lastly, one fine day condemned to the humiliation of quitting the turf, upon a decision of the Jockey Club, which gave him the alternative of taking that line, or of dismissing one of his servants, more than suspected of dishonourable manœuvres. What a gulf there is between the manners of the present time and those of the England of that day! When in April, 1795, the eldest son of George III. espoused, as a matter of form, Caroline of Brunswick, the list of his debts then presented to Parliament reached the enormous total of £650,000. It would be curious to speculate upon what the English nation would say if the present Prince of Wales had to make a similar confession on the occasion of his marriage with the Princess Alexandra. In 1795 the people murmured, but they paid. The annual income of the first gentleman of the age was fixed at £115,000, on the condition that £25,600 should be deducted for the gradual liquidation of his debts. The English, therefore, have reason to regard as very moderate the sum of £40,000 asked for by Lord Palmerston, when they recall to mind the £115,000.

The fact is that, thanks to liberty, ideas have taken a turn which would make in our days a Prince of Wales after the fashion of George Augustus Frederick, if not an impossibility, at least an anachronism. The *Morning Post* has said, and very truly, that a royal debt is a thing that has not been heard of in England for upwards of a quarter of a century.

Be that as it may, the marriage of the Queen with Prince Albert, that of the Queen's eldest daughter with the Prince Royal of Prussia, and that of the Princess Alice with Louis of Hesse, have not failed to cost the English people a considerable sum of money; for, after all, a constitutional monarchy does not bestow its advantages for nothing. Thus, the nation has had to pay in the way of annuities, in the first case, £30,000; in the second, £8,000; and in the third, £6,000.

But, on the other hand, to what amount does the civil list in England attain? To £385,000—no more; and this for the Queen of one of the most powerful and opulent countries on the earth!

In fact, if the English have no idea of haggling about providing their princes with means to support their rank becomingly, neither have they any idea of placing them in a condition to indulge in foolish prodigality, and they never forget to compare the returns a thing makes with the outlay it costs them.

LETTER CXXVII.

ENGLAND'S SYMPATHY FOR POLAND.

February 22nd, 1863.

"WHATEVER may be our hostility towards the bear, there cannot be any doubt as to the nature of our sentiments towards the jackal?"

Whose expressions are these? By whom is Russia designated by that name, "the bear?" and Prussia by that other and still more contemptuous title, "the jackal?"

The English journal that uses this harsh language is one that usually never utters a word without having first carefully weighed it, knowing that there are words which, pronounced in certain circumstances and by certain persons, carry farther than a cannon

ball, and sometimes kill more than a cannon loaded with grape,—it is a journal that, on grand occasions, is the very voice of England, and which is conscious of its responsibility because it knows its power,—it is a journal upon which, in European complications, discretion is enjoined more imperiously than ever it was upon a diplomatist,—it is the *Times*.

There is, indeed, a profound feeling of indignation in the powerful country represented by this powerful journal. In favour of Poland, and against the Court of St. Petersburgh, and above all against that of Berlin, there is only one cry throughout England. That cry will re-echo through the world.

Yesterday in the House of Lords loud cheers broke out when, after describing in measured terms,—under which indignation was with difficulty kept down,—the causes which changed the resignation of the Poles to despair, and their despair to insurrection, Lord Ellenborough exclaimed: "Was the insurrection of Poland provoked? I hope to hear the Government answer: Yes, and so place itself where a Government ought to be—at the head of public opinion." The assembly enthusiastically applauded the orator, when, by way of peroration to his speech, he pronounced these solemn words: "When I reflect on the inscrutable means employed by Providence to accomplish its designs, and how good is made to come out of evil, I open my heart to the hope that this is the commencement of a more fortunate era, and that we shall live long enough to witness the realisation of a thought, the triumph of which has been sought for by statesmen for the last eighty years, I mean the restoration of the noble Polish nation, if not in its integrity, at least in its strength, and beneath a constitutional system."

Earl Russell spoke in his turn, and not even the reserve imposed by his official character deterred him from branding, in unmistakable language, the measure suggested to the Grand Duke Constantine by the Marquis Wielopolski—that frightful measure which consisted in making out a list of all those sons of Poland who were believed to retain their living country in their memories and in their hopes, and in carrying them off and incorporating them in regiments doomed to perish in exile.

Herod, being informed that a child had been born, to whom was promised the kingdom of Judæa, commanded the massacre of all the male children in Bethlehem under two years of age; but the system of conscription designed against Poland simply

purposed to tear out her very soul. Mephistopheles himself never suggested to Faust more cruel and, at the same time, more fatal counsels. Oppression plays a dangerous game when it reduces the oppressed to the conviction that it is less dangerous to become a rebel than to remain a slave. And such was the situation carved out for the Poles. In condemning them to rot in distant and pestilential garrisons, or perish in Russian uniforms, it left them only one course to pursue—to flee into the forests, but only to come forth again resolved and threatening; to seize a musket, or in default of a musket, a scythe, or in default of a scythe, a bludgeon, because they have to contend against muskets with bludgeons, and against cannon with muskets, amid the applause of the whole earth,—to conquer, perchance—or, if might triumph over right courageously asserted, to die free men.

Doubtless it was not exactly in these words that Earl Russell expressed himself. A Minister of Foreign Affairs must learn to emasculate his vernacular tongue. A diplomatist must take care not to give his thoughts a manly, or even a true aspect; that is one of the inconveniences of his calling. But, allowing for all this, the English Minister expressed his disapprobation of the policy of Russia with a clearness and decision of which it is impossible to misapprehend the full significance. "This measure," he said, in alluding to the mode in which the conscription works in Poland, "is one of those which no minister of Great Britain would ever venture to justify. I have said to the Russian ambassador, I have written to our ambassador in Russia, that I could not help regarding it as the most imprudent and unjust measure to which the Russian Government could have recourse."

It is worthy of note that this declaration was received in the House of Lords with loud cheers, which were renewed when Earl Russell added: "I have thought it my duty to remark to the Prussian ambassador that, in my opinion, the Prussian Government, by taking part in the suppression of the Polish insurrection, renders itself in some sort responsible for the system adopted by Russia."

Senates, as a rule, are seldom carried away by enthusiasm, especially when such emotion is touched with a revolutionary tinge. We may therefore appreciate, by what passed in the House of Lords, the degree of sympathy with which England is

inspired for Poland in despair, and the extent of the indignation excited by the violent policy of St. Petersburg, so *violently* endorsed by the Cabinet of Berlin.

Towards the King of Prussia in particular the popular hatred is, I repeat, intense. The military convention which transforms, or threatens to transform, Prussian soldiers into Russian gendarmes, is denounced by the various organs of public opinion as an audacious violation of the principle of non-intervention, as a challenge to Europe, as an insult to the human conscience. In 1849, Russia helped Austria to crush the Hungarians; but at least she waited until Austria was vanquished, or on the point of being so. In this case there is no such excuse. At the very commencement of the struggle, and to aid half a million of soldiers in crushing a people armed only with its fetters, the King of Prussia tenders his assistance! As if the match were not already sufficiently unequal! As if the Right had not already chances enough to contend with! As if heavy guns had need of auxiliaries in their contest with justice!

After this manner does the English press speak its sentiments without distinction of parties, or sections of parties. The Prussian Government is thus, as it were, summoned before the bar of public opinion in Europe.

I have quoted only the *Times*, but the language of the other journals is not less impassioned.

The *Daily News* declares that William I. is henceforth a royal *outlaw*.

The *Morning Advertiser* predicts and desires for him the fate of the Stuarts.

The *Daily Telegraph* represents him as carrying aid to a bear that has upset a bee-hive over itself, and round which millions of bees are buzzing in mad rage.

The *Morning Star* intreats the English to open a vast subscription, and to throw the weight of their money into one of the scales of the balance, into the other of which the King of Prussia has thrown the weight of his sword.

The *Saturday Review* says that the convention concluded between the Court of St. Petersburg and that of Berlin is too irritating a subject to be even discussed.

The *Spectator* exclaims: "Will the Western Powers suffer their own laws and the laws of God to be thus trampled under foot?"

The state of public opinion in England being such as I have described, what will the French Government do?

If Napoleon III. has ever cast a longing eye upon the Rhenish provinces, and watched for an opportunity of playing a brilliant game, Fortune now seems to have put the cards into his hand. Might it not be said that the intervention of Prussia against Poland has been conceived for the express purpose of justifying the intervention of France against Prussia?

If the Emperor of the French were to form this conclusion, who could stop him?

The Poles have fought beneath the banner of France. Their blood has flowed, mingled with hers, on twenty fields of battle. Imperishable associations, bonds that can never be sundered, unite the two countries. Each time that Poland, for a moment erect, has been hurled to the ground, what has she said? "Heaven is too high, and France too far!" And each time that France has heard this, what has she done? She has put on mourning. Who has forgotten how, under Louis Philippe, thousands of students marched in procession through Paris, with dejected countenances, their faces pale with concentrated emotion, and with crape round their arms? Poland has succumbed. Among the causes that hastened the fall of Louis Philippe's throne, may be fearlessly placed that famous phrase of General Sebastiani: "Order reigns at Warsaw!" And in 1848, on the day when it was proposed to go in procession and present to the Assembly a petition in favour of Poland, was not all Paris on foot? A demonstration for ever to be regretted when we consider the results, but which shows clearly enough how large a space Poland occupies in the heart of France.

From what quarter would any opposition proceed, if it were proposed to succour Poland? She is Catholic, and the clerical party sighs for her deliverance. In reality the Polish question is the only one which offers to all parties in France an absolutely common ground: the only one the solution of which holds out to the government that should dare to take it up a popularity without a cloud to darken it.

The temptation is strong, and all the stronger that Russia and Prussia seem lately to have done their best to turn against themselves all that is generous in the instincts of Europe; all the stronger that even Austria stands aside with a sagacity that is greatly admired; all the stronger, in short, that the Court of

Berlin has taken upon itself to relieve the Emperor of the French of the burden of the anxiety which the restless vigilance and jealousy of England would have occasioned, without this marvellous concourse of favourable circumstances.

Still, whatever may be the vivacity of public sympathy for Poland, it must not be supposed that the possible consequences of intervention on the part of France, even though only partially successful, are regarded with indifference. The empire on the Rhine is a perspective which causes serious uneasiness to those English who love England, not only because she is their country, but because she represents in the world the principle of liberty. It would be hard upon them to see this principle flung into shadow by the splendour diffused around the adverse principle when acting in behalf of a just cause. The loss or the postponement of liberty is the great danger that attends upon military enterprises, even when their end is objectionable, and much more so when it is truly glorious.

What shall we desire? What shall we hope?

It rests, perhaps, with the Liberal party in Prussia to turn aside the genius of conquest while serving the interests of justice with a courage worthy of the cause. The Prussian Liberals can do much for Poland—they can do everything, perhaps; and, therefore, at this moment their responsibility in the eyes of the world is immense. By the military convention, the object of such general and vehement protests, it is not only Russian Poland that is stricken, but Prussian Poland is outraged. The support of the Polish deputies in the Berlin Parliament cannot therefore be wanting to the German deputies, if the latter will understand that the true interests of their country are indissolubly bound up in this instance with the triumph of justice. Should the energy of their attitude and the potency of their efforts facilitate a result that will respond to the sympathies of the friends of freedom without exciting their fears, they will render an inestimable service to Europe, for which England above all others will entertain an eternal gratitude. May Heaven inspire them! The question at issue is to secure for the principle of liberty, and, if possible, for it alone, the glory of having falsified the prediction falsely ascribed to Kosciusko: *Finis Poloniæ!*

LETTER CXXVIII.

A FORTHCOMING MARRIAGE.

February 27th, 1863.

The forthcoming marriage of the Prince of Wales is turning everybody's head. Nothing else would be thought of, were it not for the Polish insurrection which, to save the credit of English gravity, has happened at a very opportune moment to come in for its share of general solicitude. For once in a way, in spite of its fogs, England is justified in calling herself "merry England." Mirth is the order of the day; and the reason is, because the Prince of Wales is going to be married.

There is not a village of any considerable size which has not its Committee of Organization, with a view to the expected rejoicings. In towns which boast of a cathedral the musical choirs are already well practised. Wherever there is a corps of volunteers at all presentable, nothing is dreamt of but parades. In every town-hall tables are spread for banquets worthy of Gargantua, such as only Englishmen have the means of providing and devouring. To the poor—and to my taste that is the best part of the programme—substantial dinners are promised. From one end of the kingdom to the other there will be nothing but balls, concerts, firing off cannon, athletic sports of every description, pyrotechnical marvels in all manner of devices, *fêtes champêtres* without end

Some few old clergymen shake their heads with an air of reproof, and are shocked that the season of Lent should be made the season of laughter; but they are allowed to murmur in their corner, the English declining to believe that Heaven will condemn them for having shown themselves loyal subjects of their Queen.

As for the presents upon which the Princess Alexandra may fairly reckon, they pour down like hail. First of all there is the Queen's wedding present—a necklace, consisting of 2000 brilliants and 118 pearls. A fragment of the cross suspended from the necklace formed part, they say, of the true cross. O Calvin! couldst thou have foreseen, at the time thou didst indite thy terrible book against the superstitious worship of relics, that in the nineteenth century, and in Protestant England, there would

be people who believed in all that! To say nothing of the bit of silk taken from the tomb of King Canute, the patron of Denmark! Another gift of great price:—at the suggestion of Lady Rachel Butler, the fair daughters of green Erin have decided upon offering to the Princess of Wales, Countess of Dublin, a complete ball dress composed of the most beautiful lace which it is in the power of Ireland to produce. A subscription has been opened for this purpose, and the Irish ladies are crowding to subscribe.

The young Princess is expected on the 7th of March at Gravesend, to which she is to be conveyed on board a Danish war-vessel, the *Schleswig*. The whole town is already full of rumours, the whole town is already on foot. The houses in front of which the future consort of the Prince of Wales will pass to the railway station have been confided to the taste of a professional decorator. Throughout the whole route she will proceed, almost literally, beneath a roof formed of garlands. Needless to add that the town-clerk is commissioned to present an address to the future Queen of England; but it has been agreed that this sample of eloquence shall not be read to her—a delicate attention which she is certain to appreciate.

In the meanwhile London is laying itself out to astonish the young bride by a display of magnificence of which she has probably no idea. From the Bricklayers' Arms Station to the railway at Paddington she will have to traverse an ocean of people, and will arrive at the conviction that London is more populous than Denmark. Forty Thousand Pounds! That is the amount estimated for the cost of the preparations made by the sovereigns of the City—the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and so forth. The profusion of the illuminations is reported as likely to be so enormous that the gas companies have declared themselves beforehand unable to meet the demands with which they are assailed. There is some talk of transforming St. Paul's Cathedral into a veritable mountain of fire, in the style of St. Peter's at Rome at the great papal solemnities. The windows which command a view of the passage of the happy couple through London are let with avidity, and are paid for at fabulous prices. I know of one, in my own neighbourhood, which has been secured for £30. Can you imagine any one paying 750 francs for the privilege of looking out of a window for two hours?

But an important question remains to be solved. Shall the

magistrates of the City and their pompous *cortège* precede, or follow, the Prince and Princess during their passage through London? A grave difficulty, indeed, if ever there was one! There is no sky, alas! without a cloud! It seems as if there must always be a dark spot on the horizon! Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, insists that, in the procession, the Corporation of London shall march at the tail, while the Corporation of London declares that it will march at the head.

What! Are the Prince and Princess to be obliged to regulate their progress by that of the citizen monarch of the City, and of aldermen and councilmen, people who, as everybody knows, go at a turtle's pace! Are the august personages whom we are expecting, to be compelled to endure the wearisome task of ploughing through a sea of gazers, perhaps for two mortal hours, after the manner of the Lord Mayor at the solemnity of the Lord Mayor's show, or of the Bœuf-gras at Paris! That would be rather too much of a good thing!

Thus reasons Sir George Grey.

What! Do you propose to put the horse before the cart! When all London is in the streets to have a good view of the Princess, and to welcome her with shouts, do you mean that she shall pass like a flash of lightning? Have you thought of the number of individuals whose hopes you would thus destroy? Can you not see that the procession will be a failure if we do not constitute the advanced guard? Who will stop to look at us, if the Prince and Princess pass before us?

Thus speaks the Corporation.

And in their righteous indignation they threaten, if it be finally resolved to assign them the place of *impedimenta* in an army, to keep away altogether, at the risk of compromising their character for loyalty. *Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra.* Achilles, shutting himself up in his tent, displayed not a fiercer pride. The mischief is that Sir George Grey is obstinate; whereupon the Lord Mayor proposes to appeal to Lord Palmerston, and if Lord Palmerston supports his colleague—ah! then, indeed!

Observe, I beseech you, that, of all the people of the world, the English are the most reasonable.

I should much like to know what effect will be produced upon the Prince of Wales by the marvellous reception which is being prepared for his bride. If such a reception does not inspire that young man with the idea that he is a being apart in the midst of

creation, and that he does not belong to the same species as you and I, nature must have endowed him with a very rare portion of good sense. "It is an undoubted fact," relates Chamfort, "that Madame, the king's daughter, while playing with one of her nurses, looked at her hand, and, after counting her fingers, exclaimed, with an air of surprise: 'What! you, too, have five fingers, just the same as myself!'" But Chamfort was speaking of France, and of the *ancien régime* in France.

LETTER CXXIX.

PARLIAMENTARY MANIFESTATION IN FAVOUR OF POLAND.

February 28th, 1863.

England has sounded the trumpet, and in a tone that will thrill through St. Petersburg.

If it be true that there is a sovereign virtue in the loudly and unanimously declared sympathy of the only people in Europe that are at once powerful and free, insurgent Poland has reason to rejoice. Never has the House of Commons in England expressed the sentiments of the nation upon any question of the day with a stronger or more impassioned voice, or with a more striking harmony.

Was it the duty of Great Britain to intervene in favour of Poland, in the name of the public law, in the name of the respect which the conscience of mankind owes to solemn engagements? This question has been proposed by Mr. Hennessy in the face of the whole world; and when, with a voice vibrating with emotion, he represented Poland delivered over to the fatal influence exercised by Wielopolski over the Grand Duke Constantine—the nobles of Poland instigated by the counsels of Earl Russell to demand certain reforms, and as the fruits of their docility to follow the advice of an English statesman buried, as it were, alive in a fortress—the Municipal Council of Warsaw stating, under date of the 20th July, 1862, that since the commencement of the year the number of men and women crowded together in one single prison in Warsaw amounted to 14,833—the ravages of the conscription carried to such a degree that in November, 1862, it left for commercial pursuits only 683 persons

out of a population of 184,000 souls—Count Andrew Zamoyski punished by exile for the crime of having presented a respectful petition—Prince Gortschakoff threatening to introduce a government of extermination, and to reduce Poland to a heap of ashes—barracks and fortresses to be converted into political prisons—and, lastly, in the awful night of the awful 15th of January, 1863, the houses of the citizens surrounded and broken into at one in the morning, and the citizens themselves torn from their beds to be swallowed up in the Russian army,—when Mr. Hennessy, I say, traced this mournful picture, a thrill of indignation electrified the assembly.

As to the course to be pursued, opinions have slightly differed; but as to the urgency of a manifestation of unequivocal feelings, there was only one voice.

Mr. Buxton demanded that all the Powers of Europe, great and small, should be invited to unite with England in condemning the policy of Russia in the past, and in urging her to be more just for the future.

Mr. Monckton Milnes expressed the desire that Prussia should be addressed in measured terms, but that with regard to Russia a virile indignation should be adequately expressed.

Mr. Walter insisted upon the necessity of saying no more than they were prepared to maintain, if necessary, sword in hand.

Mr. Denman supported the idea of a diplomatic intervention, provided the door were left open for an intervention of another kind, should it be needed.

Lord Fermoy declared that, in his opinion, an energetic remonstrance, addressed by France, England, and Austria, would compel Russia to loosen her hold, and would make the King of Prussia draw back—representing the latter as "holding a candle to the devil."

Mr. Seymour Fitzgerald suggested the idea of an address to the Crown, as the best means of imparting a solemn character to English sympathy for Poland.

Mr. Stansfeld proposed to intimate to the King of Prussia that the English were in earnest in adopting the principle of non-intervention, and would not suffer it to be violated.

Lastly, Mr. Walpole urged upon the House not to tie the hands of the Government by a hasty vote, and to leave to the advisers of the Crown the responsibility of the measures to be adopted.

This last counsel prevailed.

Mr. Hennessy's motion, indeed, was in reality directed to the one purpose of furnishing England, as represented by the House of Commons, and in the form Government is constrained to obey, with a striking opportunity of speaking out without reserve what is pressing upon her heart. She has now made her utterance.

It is, in fact, of the last importance for England not to appear unequal to the greatness of the occasion. In the Crimean war she figured only in the second rank. In the Italian war she confined herself to good wishes, while the blood of France was flowing at Magenta and Solferino. It was not England who gathered the recompense of the blows dealt to Russia beneath the walls of Sebastopol. It was not England who bestowed Lombardy upon Victor Emmanuel, and humiliated Austria. What would become of her moral influence in the world, if, recalling his soldiers from Rome, making peace with Mexico, and once more appearing in the character of a revolutionary despot, the Emperor of the French were to seize the opportunity which Fortune, as the most brilliant of her many favours, has presented to him of shivering with one blow of his sword the Treaties of Vienna, of shivering them by striking from on high amid the applause of Europe? Would it be expedient for England, which produced a William Pitt, to allow a Napoleon to advance towards Germany, concealing the conqueror's armour beneath the knight's cloak, and, it may be, claiming from Victory, as the price of Poland restored to itself and of Justice avenged—the Rhine, from Strasburg to Coblentz? Can free England abandon to a principle she does not recognise the glory of protecting the weak, of setting up the nationalities now prostrate on the ground, and of discharging before the eyes of dazzled Europe the functions of Providence?

These are thoughts which have presented themselves to many minds on this side of the Channel, and which terrify those who fear to behold the splendour of liberty fading away like that of a falling star.

Nothing is omitted, therefore, in order to stir up the depths of public opinion in favour of Poland. While the discussion which I have briefly summarised was going on yesterday in the House of Commons, a private but very influential and very animated meeting was held to decide upon the necessary arrangements to

call together at an early date a great meeting, with a view to place before the world the sentiments, the hopes, the uneasiness of the people of England.

No doubt England would, with profound satisfaction, behold Poland rise up out of the tomb, seeing that a vigorously constituted Poland is, of all the barriers dreamed of by the foresight of Western Europe, the one that would most surely prevent Russia from overflowing. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that England longs for the hour when the bond will be burst asunder which, on the very morrow after the Crimean war, drew together the Court of the Tuileries and that of St. Petersburg. But if the Emperor of the French were to intervene single-handed against the intervention of Prussia, and a war were thence to break out between France and Russia, would not England be in danger of losing more than she would have any chance of gaining? A serious question, which is regarded not without anxiety by those who believe that, so far as they are concerned, there is as much danger on the banks of the Seine as on those of the Neva!

LETTER CXXX.

SYMPATHY TEMPERED BY PRUDENCE.

March 1st, 1863.

It is of great importance for our country, in the present conjuncture, not to fall into any mistake as to the real sentiments of England with respect to the situation created for the different Powers by the heroic despair of Poland.

For my own part, I have watched with anxious attention the workings of public opinion in England since the Poles had recourse to arms, and this is the impression I have received.

In the first place, it appears to me quite certain that the English really do sympathise with Poland. Is it because they fear Russia, or because they detest her, while Poland is a thorn in the flesh of the colossus? Let us shrink from calumniating human nature. Let us not do justice the injustice of declaring it incapable of speaking directly through itself to the heart of mankind. No, it was not alone under the inspiration of a narrow

national selfishness that Lord Ellenborough, the other day, denounced to the world, from the eminence of the English House of Lords, the horrors which have driven Poland in despair to take the resolution that, if she could not live, she would at least perish erect. No, Earl Russell's emotion was not feigned, as he branded the character and deplored the results of the influence exercised over the Grand Duke Constantine by the Machiavellian genius of Wielopolski. No, the House of Commons was not playing a part when, on the day before yesterday, with an unanimity of which parliamentary annals afford but few examples, it declared itself in favour of Right against Might, and, by the organ of all its orators, cried aloud to the Poles: "The heart of England is with you!"

It is worthy of remark that Mr. Hennessy, whose motion called forth this imposing manifestation, is a fervent Catholic. It is a Catholic who has given the signal for the homage rendered to Catholic Poland by Protestant England. By the time this letter reaches you, the report of the sitting to which I refer will be already in your hands, and you will have doubtless observed with what severity Lord Palmerston castigates the measure which has kindled this conflagration; a measure which he characterised, without any circumlocution, as barbarous, and which he, a diplomatist—he, the chief minister of this country—did not scruple to represent as an entire justification for the insurrection of Poland.

It is true, Lord Palmerston took care to lessen the practical importance of these declarations by certain reservations to which I shall presently revert; but if Lord Palmerston's language is to be attributed less to a spontaneous impulse of his own feelings than to the fear of offending public opinion by an inopportune display of indifference, does not even that show the direction of the current?

This direction, besides, has been clearly enough demonstrated, thank Heaven! by Mr. Hennessy, in demanding against Russia the strict execution of the treaties of 1815; by Mr. Seymour Fitzgerald, in supporting that motion with his utmost ability; by Lord Robert Cecil, in defining the conscription as a shameful violation of public faith; by Mr. Stansfeld, in invoking against the King of Prussia the respect due to the principle of non-intervention; and by Mr. Disraeli, in placing among the *moral obligations* of England the duty of watching over the execution of engagements contracted on behalf of Poland. All these speeches,

it must be admitted, did not aim at the same conclusion with reference to the course of conduct to be adopted; but all expressed the same wishes in favour of a people so cruelly oppressed —all are impressed with the same sentiment. In this respect the unanimity of the House of Commons is an indisputable fact. That is the first point to be established.

But, admitting all this, it is impossible to disguise from oneself that this sympathy of England, before it burst forth, I might say, before it came into existence, had great need of a kind of excitement which the platonic love of right would certainly not have sufficed to create. In their capacity of a practical people the English are little disposed to become enamoured of causes which have not power enough to defend themselves. If water flows to the river even in France, you may imagine how it must be in England. As the *Daily News* remarks, with a generous sorrow, it was not yesterday for the first time that in Poland Right has been trampled under foot in the presence and with the knowledge of entire Europe. The violation of treaties, so far as that unhappy country is concerned, is a crime which has endured for very nearly fifty years, without speaking of that other famous crime—the partition! People have been strangely slow to discover that the tolerance of the present century, in all that relates to the oppression of Poland, is the sequence of the outrages of the last, and that the nineteenth century is thus the accomplice of the eighteenth! It is fearful to think that no one seemed to hear the groans of Poland so long as she could do nothing else but groan; but every one has heard the rattling of her chains ever since she has shaken them in a manner that led to the belief that she was about to crush her tyrants with them. Right has needed the recommendation of Might, or of something that nearly resembles it, to prevent mankind from going so far as to disown it altogether.

But let us proceed. Slowly, or otherwise, the sympathy of England for Poland is now declared. That may be accepted as a fact; but the question remains to be answered, What are we to expect from that?

In the first place, take as a starting-point that England dreads a war more than anything. The day before yesterday, in the House of Commons, it was like a sensational scene on the stage when, with his usual manner and without troubling himself about eloquence, Mr. Walter, the principal proprietor of the *Times*,

simply remarked, "Mr. Hennessy's motion is War." More than one countenance changed colour. Members looked at one another. War! A torrent of cold water had been poured upon the flames. The motion was therefore withdrawn upon Mr. Walpole observing that it was not expedient to tie the hands of the Government, and that it was better to entrust to its wisdom the duty of deciding upon the course to be taken. What course? Every one knew perfectly well when the withdrawal of the motion was voted that Lord Palmerston on such an occasion was not the man to adopt any extreme measure. Had he not just declared, in that respect like a true diplomatist, that the treaties of 1815 conferred upon England the *right* to intervene, but without imposing upon her any *obligation* to do so? And while protesting the indignation awakened in his breast by a "barbarous measure," had he not pronounced a pompous eulogy upon the Emperor of Russia, offering almost to guarantee the goodness of his intentions, and ascribing to him the honour of many great ideas, among others that of the emancipation of the serfs? The House of Commons, therefore, was quite sure of not being led too far by following in the footsteps of such a guide.

Without sharing the monomania of Mr. Urquhart, who seems to have been sent into the world for no other purpose than to accuse Lord Palmerston of having sold himself to Russia, it is well, I think, to remember that if, in 1831, Poland succumbed, without aid from abroad, it was much less the fault of Louis Philippe than of Lord Palmerston.

M. Walewski cannot be ignorant of that, as it was he who, at that period, was sent to London to sound, in the name of insurgent Poland, the disposition of the Cabinet of St. James's.

The attitude assumed by Austria at the present moment, and which astonishes persons not well versed in contemporary history, is precisely the same as she assumed at that time. Then, as now, she was sensible of the great danger with which she was threatened by the progress of the Russians along the Black Sea and in the direction of Constantinople. Then, as now, she understood the necessity of a Poland to serve as a dam against the overflowing of Russia. Then, as now, separating her cause from that of the two Powers to whom she was bound by the unholy bond of a spoliation consummated in common, she showed a disposition to make head, in concert with France and England, against Russia, aided by Prussia, even should such a policy cost

her Galicia; and it was from her—yes, from her, from Austria—that proceeded the initiative of the measures to be adopted to save Poland from perishing.

Who ruined that project? Louis Philippe? No. However blindly devoted to the interests of peace that prince might have been, he accepted the overtures of Austria. But the adhesion of a third party was required, and that adhesion was refused. Lord Palmerston bluntly declared that the relations of England with Russia were friendly, and that he had no intention of altering them. I have lying before me the text of his reply to Prince Talleyrand's note, dated the 20th of June, 1831. Nothing could be more categorical: "His Britannic Majesty finds himself compelled to reject the propositions which have been transmitted to him by his Excellency Prince Talleyrand, being of opinion that the time is not yet come to adopt them with success against the will of a sovereign *whose rights are indisputable.*"

Terrible were the consequences of that refusal. Austria, intimidated, held her tongue. Poland, after prodigies of constancy and valour, was crushed. General Sebastiani, in announcing that "Order reigns in Warsaw," opened the chapter of blunders which brought about 1848. France went into mourning.

What will happen now?

If I am not mistaken in my observations upon the agitation in the midst of which I live as it were enveloped, what the English in general desire is, that by means of a combined intervention, but of a purely diplomatic character, and presented in a manner not likely to bring about a hostile collision, the King of Prussia should be prevailed upon to observe a strict neutrality. It is the intervention of the King of Prussia that troubles and disturbs the English. And why? For this very simple reason, that they see in it a temptation to France also to intervene, in pushing the matter further than they themselves have any wish to do. A war, even with France for an ally, terrifies them; while, on the other hand, it would be a sore displeasure to them to see the Emperor of the French engage single-handed in a quarrel with Prussia, in which he would have on his side the sympathies of peoples, and in which it might not be impossible that, as a recompense for the support afforded to a just cause, he might secure for himself by victory a strong position upon the Rhine.

The article in the *Morning Post*, to which the *Temps* replied with such cutting vivacity, is little better than a bad style of

jesting, and in no way expresses the opinion of the English upon this grave subject. You may take it for certain that a war between France and Prussia is an eventuality which no Englishman contemplates with indifference; and were it proper for me to express my whole thought, I would explain to you why the possibility of such a war specially alarms the friends of liberty on this side of the Channel, however sincere may be their sympathies for Poland.

But what the English would really like is a war between France and Russia—Prussia taking no part in it, and themselves strictly conforming to the *rôle* of the monkey that eats the chestnuts which the cat has drawn out of the fire. In this, indeed, they would see nothing that was not advantageous. Russia has no Rhenish provinces to be taken from her, and to get at her is not easy, as the fate of Napoleon I. has proved too well. The struggle, as it appears before the mind's eye of England, would probably have the effect of considerably weakening a Power whom she dreads, without giving to a Power whom she distrusts too many chances of territorial aggrandisement,—a contingency which is to her an eternal subject of uneasiness.

Such, in my opinion, are the data of the problem which is now placed before Europe. Heaven grant that it be solved both in the sense of the justice due to a generous people, and in the sense of the liberty due to all peoples,—including France.

LETTER CXXXI.

HOLIDAY PREPARATIONS.

March 4th, 1863.

Who would believe it? England, grave England, seems at this moment to have only one thought: the Prince of Wales is going to be married!

Yes, in the midst of so many events, some of a mournful, others of an alarming character, which occupy the serious attention of Europe, England thinks only of the Princess Alexandra whom Denmark is sending to her, of the magnificent reception which must be given to her, of the presents which are to be offered to her, of the triumphant arches beneath which it is proper for her

to pass, of the flowers which are to be scattered on her path, of the oceans of people which London will furnish for her to traverse, and of the fabled illuminations which will mark her conqueror-like arrival, her apparition as a young fairy. The splendours of the "Arabian Nights" await her. Let her come quickly! England is dying with impatience. Already, from one end of the kingdom to the other, every town has put on its holiday attire. Already are spread the tables at which twenty-six millions of human beings are going to drink to the health of their future queen. Ladies can talk and dream of nothing else—as may easily be imagined—than the wedding-dress, the *chef-d'œuvre* of M. Levysohn, of Copenhagen, and, it is said, the most beautiful specimen of needle-work which has ever figured among the temptations of the daughters of Eve. To the Princess of Wales, Baroness of Renfrew, the Scottish ladies will present a Paisley shawl, of which wonders are told. To the Princess of Wales, the Countess of Dublin, the Irish ladies will present the most beautiful lace that has ever been known within the memory of man. Superb ear-rings and a diamond necklace, akin to that which the Cardinal de Rohan purchased for Marie Antoinette, will testify to the kingly enthusiasm of the City potentates. The famous gates from Norwich, so much admired at the International Exhibition of last year, are destined to adorn the entrance of Sandringham Park—they are an offering to the Prince of Wales, and are to be paid for by a subscription for that purpose opened in Norfolk. A diamond cross of the value of £800, was to have been the contribution of the ladies of Liverpool to the graceful tax which England is imposing upon herself, but they have since bethought them that the Princess will have more diamond crosses than she will know what to do with, and they mean to think it over. As for the Manchester ladies, they met last Monday in a solemn assembly to choose divers jewels of great price; and considering that, according to a very generally accepted belief in Poland, the opal averts diseases of the heart, that the diamond is the emblem of innocence, and the emerald of constancy in love, they decided in favour of a bracelet composed of twenty opals, the whole enriched with diamonds and emeralds.

If from offerings I pass unto preparations, there is a thick volume to be written. In London they have the proportions of that almost illimitable city, which is saying everything. From the Bricklayers' Arms to the terminus of the railway which will

convey the happy couple to Windsor, scaffoldings are being erected on a scale to make one shudder—it is heaping Ossa upon Pelion, Pelion upon Ossa: spectators and spectatresses will certainly be stifled in every window, for they are let at idiotic prices. There will also be grand dinners, as has formally been advertised; indigestions having their proper place in the programme. Ask not if the Lord Mayor and his famous coach, if the sheriffs and the sword-bearer with his sword for ever unstained by human blood, and spectacles on nose, if the devourers of turtle-soup, known by the name of Aldermen, if the Wellington of the streets, who is styled the City-marshal, if the chaplain of his Citizen Majesty the Lord Mayor, if the Recorder, the City Remembrancer, the City Pleader, &c., &c., &c., will be of the party. London renounce the City, its pomps and vanities! Never!

It is not for nothing that the Prince of Wales was the other day received as a fishmonger, and took his oath in that capacity. The whole of the City dignitaries will, I repeat, be there, with all the Companies, from the Fishmongers to the Spectacle Makers.

For an instant the City was in gloom. Sir George Grey had the presumption,—in order that the cortège might not move along at a turtle's pace, and to prevent the young Danish princess from sinking under the fatigue of so many honours—to banish the Lord Mayor, the Court of Aldermen, the Knights of the Middle Ages and all the rest of it, to the tail of the procession, so that the affair might be quickly got over. This was equivalent to saying to the City aristocrats: There will be admiration for you, should there be any over. Fancy that! The Lord Mayor, as the Premier Amphitryon of England, took up the matter in a tone befitting his dignity. Sir George Grey was informed that at the Mansion House it was thought very unseemly that the cart should pass before the horse, and that, consequently, the City must figure at the head of the procession, or not at all. He might please himself. The Government were compelled to lower their flag. In this manner, thank Heaven! the clouds in that quarter have at the present moment entirely passed away. The Princess is in some danger of arriving at Windsor half dead; but the Lord Mayor will have carried his point—and is that nothing?

Another difficulty—this time arising from certain clergymen of exquisite scruples. Is it lawful to laugh during Lent? Let us not render unto Cæsar the things that belong unto God. Such

is the language of these morose individuals. But people let them talk and seem to think—and such is also the opinion of the Bishop of Oxford—that, as the Princess Alexandra happens to arrive in Lent, Lent must be given up to the Princess Alexandra. An attempt will therefore be made to illuminate St. Paul's by electric gas, nor will anything be omitted that can serve to demonstrate popular intoxication of joy—fireworks, dances, banquets, sports, fêtes champêtres, volunteer reviews, &c., &c., &c.

Now, what is the meaning of all this? The Princess Alexandra is, it seems, an accomplished person; and as for her young bridegroom, who has not yet had an opportunity of showing what is in him, he is the son, the heir, of a queen who has won the hearts of her people. Besides, and it is only fair to make the admission, the English are indebted to the constitutional monarchy, as it has been understood and carried out under the Government of Victoria, for many years of tranquillity, prosperity, and progress. It is therefore only natural and proper that they should prepare an affectionate greeting for her who is to be the consort of their future king. To that the most ill-conditioned mind could find nothing to object. But these transports, this almost exclusive application of the thoughts, these raptures, this idolatry of persons always dangerous, and especially dangerous when not attached to the idea of some great work accomplished, of some great service rendered—this is what is so astonishing on the part of a grave people and in a free country What is the use of idols where Liberty has her altars?

At the time of the accession of Queen Victoria there were certainly public rejoicings, which were repeated on the occasion of her wedding, as was only just; but they did not come anywhere near to what is now going on. Is not this singular? If the English had as much good taste as they have good sense, in general, they would, perhaps, have seen that in greeting with so much exaggeration the hope of a future reign, they were in some danger of paying a sorry compliment to the actual reign, with which, nevertheless, they are quite satisfied. But, oddly enough, this very obvious idea seems never to have occurred to anyone.

The only point which appears to have caused a slight embarrassment to the *Times*, is the probable judgment which foreigners will pass upon these childish ebullitions of zeal. It takes pains, therefore, to give them the most serious character possible, and it finds itself under the necessity of, first of all, explaining them.

The explanation is curious.

The first reason which the *Times* assigns for the monstrous infatuation which we are witnessing is, that youth and beauty are from their very nature loveable, and that a young man and a young woman are about to be married. It is difficult to discover any explanation in that. It is true, the *Times* tells us that these young people are a couple upon whom the eyes of the world are fixed.

The second reason, the *Times* being still my authority, is "the profound and hearty conviction, that the monarchial principle and these emotions of loyalty, which no other form of government is capable of exciting, do not belong to that age of ruins which we have left behind us." Here, again, it is not easy to trace any logical connection between the motive and its supposed results. But let that pass. In the sentence I have just quoted, there are two false statements. Monarchy also belongs to "that age of ruins which we have left behind us," for monarchy is not of yesterday. It implies, too, an entire forgetfulness of the French Revolution to ignore the powerful emotions, the heroic fidelity, the irresistible impulses which may spring from love of one's country, even when that country is not personified in a man.

That the *Times* should congratulate England on not having followed France over a sea abounding with rocks and shoals, is natural enough; but that it should discover in that a proof of greatness, instead of confining itself to beholding therein a proof of prudence, is hard to understand. If there is a characteristic which cannot be withheld from the French Revolution, it is precisely that of greatness. And even if it were terrible, it was so because it was also grand—grand through the loftiness of its aim, through the development of its strength, through the disinterestedness of its enterprises, through the extent of its sacrifices, through the mournful majesty of its suicide! It did not, it is true, cause three millions of human beings to leave their homes to look at a couple of lovers pass through the streets on their way to get married; but, to make up for that, by a word, by a sign, it caused fourteen raging armies to leap forth from the soil of France, to whom, in the name of its principles, it gave orders to vanquish the coalition of Europe, very certain that its orders would be executed. The emotions it had the power to arouse were not, it is true, such as take the form of gatherings of gazers and good dinners; but, to make up for that again, they were such

as inspire the *Marseillaise*, command victory, abound in self-sacrifice, and bring death under subjection.

Let the *Times*, then, learn to be more modest. Let it study, however superficially, that "age of ruins," and it will be astonished at the quantity of good seed concealed, but not choked beneath the heap.

Besides, one would fancy that England herself had never had any conflict with the awesome genius of Revolution! We may say to the *Times* what Charles I. said to Bishop Juxon before placing his head upon the block—Remember.

LETTER CXXXII.

THE PRINCESS ALEXANDRA'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO LONDON.

March 8th, 1863.

Yesterday, March the seventh, was the great day—the great day because a young girl came hither from Denmark to espouse a young man.

The business of the day was to see them pass.

For a month past we should have thought of nothing else, if we had been entirely dependent on the English journals; and in truth they have said so much, so very much, about it, that England has almost come to believe that the only question worthy to occupy her thoughts is the marriage of the Prince of Wales and the Princess Alexandra.

The Prince of Wales is the eldest son of the Queen of England, and is destined to succeed to her; so far, so well. But, after all, up to this time the uninitiated public are aware of no other particular merit in him than that of being the son of his father and mother. As for the Princess Alexandra, she is said to be very intelligent, and very amiable, and she is pretty; but, so far as the public are concerned, so little is known about her, that at this very hour there is not one Englishman in ten thousand who does not believe that she is a Dane, who does not call her the Fair Maid of Denmark, and who does not lovingly do homage, in the person of his future Queen, to the daughter of the ancient sea-kings. It would astonish not a few, I assure you, if they were told that the Princess is a native of Germany;

that her father, Prince Christian, is a German; that her mother is a German; in a word, that she is a Dane only in this sense, that she has resided in Copenhagen, and that her father, a kinsman of the reigning King of Denmark, was chosen by the European Congress of 1852, as successor to that monarch, who is divorced from his wife, and will die without legitimate issue. But no matter! Public opinion, which governs the English as well as the rest of the world, has willed that the Princess Alexandra should be a Dane; and only the other day a newspaper discovered in her features the true Scandinavian type! I have nothing more to say against it.

For the last month, then, nothing has been talked of, from one end of England to the other, but how to contrive for this charming daughter of *Scandinavia* a welcome so splendid as to efface the memory of all that has ever been known in this style since first it became the fashion upon this earth which we inhabit, to hold festivals in honour of mortal deities. Every town had its Reception Committee. In every town the great business of the day was to organize against the looked-for hour, all sorts of rejoicings: balls, concerts, athletic sports, pyrotechnical representations, illuminations, banquets, and, I am happy to add, dinners for the poor.

And the presents! Shall I speak of the presents? The ladies of England, Scotland, and Ireland, have rivalled each other in zeal. It has been decided that the happy Princess should receive from the ladies of Manchester, a bracelet of magnificent opals; from the ladies of Liverpool, a rich diamond cross; from the ladies of Paisley, the most beautiful shawl that has ever come out of that town; from the ladies of Dublin, the most beautiful lace that has ever done honour to Irish industry; from the City of London a necklace and ear-rings of the value of £10,000. I must stop here—it is an Homeric catalogue, and I fear to inspire your fair readers with jealousy.

The preparations along the whole line of road to be traversed have been immense; for the least that could be done was to contrive that the bride of the Prince of Wales should advance beneath triumphal arches erected at short intervals, and should pass in front of no house which the decorator's art had not undertaken to paint and ornament for the occasion. But it is in London especially that decorators, carpenters, upholsterers, house-painters, and workmen skilled in the manipulation of gas, have

had their hands full. From the Bricklayers' Arms Station, where the princess was expected, to London Bridge — from London Bridge to Temple Bar—from Temple Bar to Charing Cross—from Charing Cross to Hyde Park, and across Hyde Park to the Paddington Station, where the princess had to take the railway to proceed to Windsor Castle, more complete transformations were effected in a few days than the wand of the wizard Merlin could have accomplished in the same time.

Over a distance of seven to eight miles, nothing was to be seen after a few hours but interminable galleries, gigantic balconies, houses festooned with green or red baize, scaffoldings upon scaffoldings, waving banners, deluges of artificial flowers, —what more can I say? London disguised itself as if for a masquerade. And this is the season of Lent!

The puritans have therefore grumbled a little. Rejoice in Lent! It is said that a deputation of bishops waited upon the Queen to present to her some respectful remonstrances on this head, which her Majesty cut short with these words: "Reasons of State." It is also reported that yesterday, while all London was holiday-making, several clergymen, by way of pious protest, went to the Crystal Palace, not for the purpose of fasting, if you please, but to dine together. Moreover, the Bishop of Oxford, a courtier and a man of sense, has been kind enough to undertake to calm timid consciences by a public letter. It was very good of him—but people could have done very well without it.

Among the curious episodes connected with the question of preparations, there is one which is worth mentioning.

The dancer Vestris exclaimed one day: "This is the first time that our house has had a coolness with the house of Bourbon." The coolness was produced in consequence of Vestris having demanded, for dancing before the Court, a remuneration superior to the allowances of a Marshal of France. When the others appeared scandalised at his presumption, he haughtily rejoined: "Well, then, for such a sum as that let the king make his marshals dance, if he can." The Corporation of London has held nearly the same language with reference to the place in the procession which Sir George Grey proposed to assign to the City dignitaries. He wished to place them at the tail, to save the Princess from being over-fatigued by the slowness of the march and the length of the ceremony. They desired to be at

the head, so that, whether one cared for it or not, they would have to be seen passing in pomp, and also—to do them justice—because they feared that the public would not have time to enjoy the spectacle upon which they so greatly reckoned. There was knitting of brows on both sides. Vestris declared that on those conditions he would not dance. What! was that the tone they were going to take with the Lord Mayor? Very good. Sir George Grey might find, if he could, another Lord Mayor, another coach, another Common Crier, and another Sword-bearer. A compromise became necessary, and it was finally agreed that as far as Temple Bar, the limit of their jurisdiction, the Corporation should precede the betrothed couple, but that at Temple Bar, abandoning the duty of escort to the civic authorities of Westminster, they should return to the Mansion House by Chancery Lane and Holborn.

These clouds being dispersed, there remained only one subject of anxiety, the eternal subject of anxiety in London—the weather. Would the weather be favourable? Confiding spirits loved to repeat,—what, indeed, is true—that since the accession of Victoria, it has never been her lot to grace any public ceremony without the sun, by special favour, flooding the whole scene with its light, and they flattered themselves with the hope that the Princess Alexandra would enjoy the same privilege. Up to the 6th, in fact, the sky had been radiant. Spring seemed to be coming forward to welcome the adopted daughter of England. But lo! on the very eve of the fortunate day a violent wind arose, and clouds gathered around. On the seventh the heavens were grey and sad, and the sun, as is its wont, treated England with as much rigour as if she had no one at all to gaze at in passing.

I myself went out at an early hour, proceeding towards St. James's Street by the Edgeware Road. The Princess' route, I need hardly say, was traced for a distance of nearly eight miles by two hedges of people, very dense, but not so as to prevent free circulation between them and the houses. As I had resolved, for your sake, to study the physiognomy of the crowd at close quarters, I had refused one of those seats which were so coveted for that day, and some of which fetched as much as ten guineas each.

The streets throughout the whole course of the route were, as you may imagine, decorated with flags; balconies and galleries

were crowded with ladies in full dress; people leaned out of the windows in the impatience of curiosity; everywhere the word WELCOME; everywhere the three white feathers, the emblem of the Prince of Wales; they were even stamped on the pat of butter which had been placed upon my table at breakfast time; everywhere festoons and garlands of artificial flowers, and devices—some simple and touching, such as "May they be happy!"—others ridiculously emphatic, such as, "Long live the Prince of Wales, the Hope of Nations!"

In the Edgeware Road, in which a magnificent triumphal arch had been erected, several small shops were open when I passed through it, for it is not a district that aspires to the honours of a fashionable loyalty; but in Bond Street and in Regent Street, although out of the route of the procession, business was decidedly making holiday, and the mere aspect of the houses reminded one of the celebrated—*A demain les affaires sérieuses.* But what am I saying? For many on that day it was precisely the *affaire sérieuse,* which caused the shops to be closed.

In St. James's Street and Pall Mall it was a very pleasant sight. The Arthur, the Conservative, the Oxford and Cambridge, and the Reform Clubs, and the War Office, in themselves veritable palaces, and palaces tastefully decorated, presented to the fascinated gaze a whole world of pretty spectatresses, seated in galleries constructed for the purpose. These waited with patience and looked on while, drums beating and bands playing, volunteers in grey, green, and blue uniforms, marched past on their way to Hyde Park, where they were to assemble to the number of sixteen thousand.

The defiling past had ceased, and I had taken my post of observation on the pavement of St. James's Street, in company with a French gentleman of my acquaintance, when suddenly in King Street, not a stone's-throw from where I was standing, a sort of unnatural cry, and the sound of a strange kind of music were heard. I ran in that direction. O nothingness of human greatness! I beheld a band of Ethiopian serenaders, conducted by a fellow dressed up as Punch. These audacious poor wretches had come there to dispute with the Princess Alexandra the fruits of the general curiosity. In the twinkling of an eye they were surrounded by their admirers and their public.

A circumstance which I must not omit, because it strongly resembles a characteristic trait of national character, is that, about

an hour before the Life Guards and policemen had cleared the middle of the street, the crowd became visibly agitated. Hurrahs next rang through the air. Then was seen, in an open carriage, a personage dressed in a new suit of clothes, but whose appearance, if the truth be told, was very much that of a valet who had put on his master's coat. The personage thus greeted was Tom Sayers—yes, sir, Tom Sayers, the boxer. Was there any irony in these acclamations? I think there was, and I like to think so. But, for all that, in front of myself there were a hundred or more of rough fellows who seemed to be crying hurrah, as if they meant it. After all, did not Tom Sayers, after having had his nose broken by the American Heenan, whose eyes he bunged up, receive an ovation at Liverpool?

The programme stated that the Prince of Wales and his bride would be in St. James's Street about half-past three. It was about a quarter past four when at length a distant roar, more and more sharply defined as it came nearer, announced the arrival of the couple so impatiently expected. There were six royal carriages, containing: the first, Sir George Grey, Colonel Seymour, Captain Lund, and M. Funk; the second, the Countess Hilda Reventlow, and Mme. Vauvile; the third, General and Mme. Oxholme; the fourth, Prince Waldemar and Prince William; the fifth, Prince Frederick, the Princess Dagmar, and the Princess Thyra; the sixth, the Prince of Wales, the Princess Alexandra, Prince Christian, and the Princess Louise.

No English journal, so far as I am aware, has ever stated it, or will ever make the statement, but I have it from a good source, that, if the Queen's first impulse had been followed, the court carriages would have been so many mourning coaches, so fresh does the memory of Prince Albert remain upon her mind! To the incontrollable inspirations of this sorrow, which knows no repose and suffers no moments of forgetfulness, must be attributed both the resolution taken not to celebrate the marriage in London, and the invitation addressed to the members of the Corps Diplomatique to appear in mourning at the Drawing Room lately held by the Prince of Wales.

Be that as it may, the carriages which rolled past before my eyes recalled, thank Heaven! no mournful ideas. In the last one, which was preceded and followed by two half-troops of the Life Guards, was the Princess. As she passed, saluting right and left with much natural grace, a shout was raised which must have

gone to her heart, for it seemed really to issue from the heart of the immense multitude heaped together along her route. A few minutes afterwards she was received by the Duke of Cambridge at the turning into Hyde Park, which she traversed amid the acclamations of the Volunteers drawn up in order of battle, and proceeded to take the railway at Paddington, everywhere fêted, everywhere welcomed.

In the evening it remained for me to visit the illuminations, but it set in to rain. Besides, I had seen, the evening before, the finest of them all, the one upon which Poole, the Prince of Wales's tailor, had the shrewdness to spend £1000. The fact was *advertised* the same day to every newspaper in England, by the electric telegraph. Never will the fidelity of a loyal subject have resulted in a better investment of capital.

And now, if you ask me what I think of all this, I will tell, first of all, that as a fête it has been an utter failure. Nothing could be more vulgar and common-place than the procession as far as Temple Bar; and after leaving Temple Bar nothing could be less imposing that the cortège, consisting of six carriages and a handful of men on horseback. The part taken by Government in the affair, in whatever manner it may be explained, was just none at all, absolutely none. It is the simple truth, that the spectators formed the spectacle.

But what deeply interested me was the attitude of the people, whose enthusiasm the English press, I know not for what reason, had been labouring for a month past to bring to a white heat. The reception which the people of London gave to the Princess Alexandra was exactly what in my opinion it ought to have been —frank, respectful, cordial, but without anything to remind one of the sort of fetichism for which the language of the newspapers had prepared us. In reality, on this occasion, the people gave their habitual instructors a grand lesson in demeanour, dignity, and good taste. A fact that is worthy of note, because it does honour to the bearing of liberty, and proves that, where the press is free, its empire ceases on the day it ceases to be in the right. In fact, if the people of London had yielded to the impulse which the Press in general, and the *Times* in particular, wished to give it, we should have witnessed marvels of enthusiasm, indescribable transports, and, to make use of an expression of the *Times* itself, a spectacle unprecedented, perhaps, in history. And for what, pray?

If the directors of this movement intended that England should take advantage of this occasion to do homage to herself, the measure was commanded by taste, which is the quintessence of good sense.

Was it their object to bring out boldly, in relief, the reverence felt by Englishmen for a constitutional monarchy? For what purpose? Where is the necessity of clamorously shouting for a principle which is in no danger, as if it were a treasure which one was on the point of losing?

The *Times* lately took credit to itself because the public rejoicings in honour of the arrival of the Princess Alexandra would greatly surpass in splendour all that had taken place both at the accession and at the wedding of the present Queen. And the clever men on the *Times* did not see that to go with such transport to welcome a future reign, is treating the actual reign with some rudeness, and seems a forgetfulness of the many tranquil and prosperous years which England owes to it.

The people, however, felt that by instinct, and accordingly tendered to the bride of him who will one day be King of England an affectionate welcome, but one exempt from exaggeration and servility.

To say to princes that they are the hope of the earth; to desire a great kingdom to be turned upside down because two lovers are going to be married; to find it admirable that a great people should be absorbed in the cares of a wedding festival, when nations like Poland are in the agony of death, and a hemisphere is swimming in blood—all that may be good for societies which have not yet issued from infancy, or have returned to it. But the English people—let us not grow weary of repeating it—are a people who have attained their majority. Such puerilities are unworthy of them.

On the other hand, it is a bad constitutional education to give a young prince, to fill him with the idea that he belongs to a separate species, that he is of the race of the demi-gods. If you wish him to be sober, do not pour out champagne to him in bumpers. After all, what will the Prince of Wales have to be when he occupies the throne of England? The first of those who are called by that fine title, "public servants"—a fine title, because there is only one master who can be served with dignity—The People. For myself, were I the last of the rag-gatherers, I should blush to have for my device, if it meant anything else, the device of the Prince of Wales: *Ich dien*—I serve.

LETTER CXXXIII.

THE SAME SUBJECT.

March 9th, 1863.

The tramping of some hundreds of thousands of men; the flux and reflux of an innumerable multitude; the uninterrupted war of an ocean of human voices; distant shouts augmenting in volume as they come nearer and nearer, and ending in a burst of thunder—it is in these pompous terms that an English journal, enjoying a wide circulation, endeavours to give foreigners an idea of what the English have agreed to describe as the Triumphal Entry of the Princess Alexandra, though, be it said between ourselves, the Princess Alexandra has never triumphed over any one save the Prince of Wales.

The same journal adds, still in the heroic vein, "There are three things which cannot be described; the boundless sea, the untrodden prairie, and immense multitudes."

Let us descend for an instant from the sublime regions to which this rhetoric has transported us, and avoid raptures, if it be possible.

I was present, and saw all; and without pretending to deny that on the 7th of March, 1863, the streets of London were filled with a prodigious number of people, I cannot bring myself to shout in chorus with the English papers, which seem to have passed the signal to one another not to speak of the ceremony of yesterday without inflating the voice beyond all measure, and as if, since the beginning of things, no people or city in the world had been capable of presenting a similar spectacle.

In the first place, I assure you that the general aspect of London, as the aspect of a town in gala attire, was in no way distinguished from what is remarked anywhere on similar occasions —triumphal arches, houses decorated with flags, balconies half disappearing beneath foliage and flowers, long galleries hastily constructed, and bending beneath the weight of the spectators, living hedges lining both sides of certain streets, ladies crowding to the windows and ready to wave their handkerchiefs, preparations for the illumination, canvas more or less coarsely painted exhibited, here and there, devices more or less ingenious, inscriptions more or less consistent with good taste.

As for the cortège, what can possibly be said about it? There was absolutely none, unless you choose to dignify by that name the procession of the City magnates, which offered nothing of greater interest than a file of carriages, and a series of flags which may be seen at all Lord Mayor's Shows—a procession, moreover, which went no farther than Temple Bar, extreme limit of the territory placed under the jurisdiction of the Corporation of London. To sum up, six royal carriages of very ordinary appearance—in a country famous for the beauty of its equipages—and a handful of Life Guards on their black chargers—this is what constituted the spectacle, so far as it was a mere spectacle. In truth, some allowance must be made for the marching past of the volunteers, with their bands playing, on their way to Hyde Park; but for the last twelvemonths it has been an everyday sight to behold volunteers marching through the streets. The fact is, that the authorities made no attempt, none whatever, to add to the brilliancy of the show. One might almost have fancied that the Court and Government were in the sulks.

This remark, I assure you, is not mine alone. The English press passes lightly over it, but the fact was so obvious that vain are the efforts of certain newspapers to ignore it: and even the *Times* is reduced to exclaim, "The gem was there, but it lacked a setting."

There remained, then—putting aside the interest which attached to the person of the Princess—there remained, as an object of curiosity—what? The crowd of spectators.

Now, that this crowd was immense, must be granted; but what is there to astonish one in that? Is not London a city with a larger population than many kingdoms? Besides, what sort of fête is it that, within a given space, does not present the appearance of a human inundation? So far as the mere crowding together of human beings is concerned, the fêtes of Paris, of Vienna, even of Brussels, have never had any reason to envy the fête of which London has just been the theatre. The crowd here is only more considerable, if it be taken as a whole, because the space to be covered is much more vast; but this vastness of space is not embraced by the eye. I happened to be in Brussels last September, at the time of the reception offered to King Leopold, and the effect produced by the assembled crowd was, so far as I was concerned, exactly the same as that produced by the London crowd the day before yesterday.

As for the motive which put this prodigious city in motion, I

have nothing to say against it. The Prince of Wales is the eldest son of a Queen who is popular, and, for many reasons, deservedly so. He himself, without having yet had time to merit the love of the people, has done nothing to justify apprehension or to discourage hopes. The consort whom his heart has chosen has those two great charms—youth and beauty; and she is said to be an accomplished person. It is therefore natural that the English should receive a princess who becomes the adopted daughter of England with a mixture of respect and affection. And this is exactly what did take place.

But there is a wide difference between that and the inflated, hyperbolical, and—the word will out—ridiculously servile language of many of the English newspapers. To listen to them, England, while looking at a young man and a young woman pass along on their way to be married, has given the earth a great lesson and a great example—she has added an immortal page to history—she has shown how much a principle weighs in the eyes of the Saxon race; in a word, we have only, being what we are, to humble ourselves henceforth before the greatness and wisdom of such a people.

All that is simply absurd. For my own part, I, who am neither an Englishman nor a Belgian, declare that I was a thousand times more affected by the reception given last year to King Leopold in Brussels than I was by that which London has just offered to the Princess Alexandra. And why? For this very simple reason, that at the former of these two fêtes there was something more than an homage rendered to a man—there was also the veneration of an idea. One felt that, in the King, the people revered the law, respected liberty guaranteed, national independence defended. But here, what was there like unto that? To impart a serious character to its emphatic eulogies, and to avert all suspicion of servility, the *Times* takes care to tell us, and all the other journals repeat in chorus, that English loyalty was resolved to manifest itself in a splendid manner, in a manner the like of which has never before been witnessed in the world. And why all this, I ask? Has anyone, peradventure, questioned the fidelity of the English towards their princess?—a very conditional fidelity, after all, be it said, and which does not prevent them from dethroning their princes when there is need, or from expelling them, or from treating them in a yet worse manner.

But, you will say, has nothing been able to disarm the misanthropical pride of your disdain in this ceremony of the 7th of March, about which so much has been, and still is being, said? Pardon me. One thing did affect me—and that was the attitude of the people. The people of London discovered by instinct the line between hospitality and servility, between a tender interest and an indiscreet curiosity, between respect and fetichism.

Whatever of greatness was in the fête, was in that.

LETTER CXXXIV.

LORD PALMERSTON AND POLAND.

March 16th, 1863.

The Princess Alexandra of Denmark is now the Princess of Wales. Of her *triumphal entry* into London there remains only the remembrance. The triumphal arches erected in her honour will soon be nothing more than gigantic skeletons, and then not so much even as that. The galleries constructed along the streets of the monster-city have disappeared. The illuminations are extinguished. The flowers which decorated the balconies have faded away. The men and women who were stifled to death in the crowd have been buried. Resuming her ordinary grave demeanour, England is at last willing to fix her thoughts upon something else than epithalamia. Let us follow her example. Let us speak of something serious—it is full time.

A few days ago I discoursed on the recent outburst of English sympathy in behalf of Poland. That sympathy is genuine. And so powerfully was it expressed in that sitting of the Commons which I have already described, so unanimous were the tokens of it, so unlike his usual diplomatic reserve were the assurances it drew forth from Lord Palmerston himself, that one may naturally look out for important consequences. Has not the press, too, with an enthusiasm that almost smells of powder, re-echoed the vehement protestations of Parliament? Did not the *Times* seem bent on blowing into a mighty rage that public opinion which it guides so often, through the simple fact of appearing to represent it? Did not people talk of opening subscriptions, of getting up meetings, of organising through the

length and breadth of England that customary forerunner of hard blows, an AGITATION?

Nevertheless, in the very heat of the general feeling, signs of uneasiness began to show themselves. Even while he denounced as "barbarous" the measure which had placed arms in the hands of the Poles, while he heaped reproaches on the convention made between Russia and Prussia, and appealed to the binding faith of treaties, Lord Palmerston also remarked: "The engagements of 1815 give England the *right* without laying on her any *obligation* to interfere." By virtue of these skilfully ambiguous phrases he intended that England should reserve to herself the power of acting as she chose, with an eye to her own interests, irrespectively of any idea of duty.

On the other hand, the House of Commons had denied all practical issue to Mr. Hennessy's motion, by making over to the wisdom of government the task of giving effect to the sympathy so loudly shown by England towards the Poles.

Remember also that Lord Palmerston's past bearing towards the Polish question was not likely to reassure the true friends of Poland, whenever the time came for abandoning the solution of the problem to that veteran dip'omatist.

Is the Prime Minister of England bound by a secret compact to Russia? Such, indeed, is the charge incessantly repeated against him by his implacable foe, Mr. Urquhart; but such is not the belief of people whose good sense, unlike Mr. Urquhart's, remains unclouded by their subtle fancies. For my part, I hold it nothing less than a huge absurdity to suspect Lord Palmerston of being sold to Russia. This much, however, is certain, that of all European statesmen, Lord Palmerston has hitherto done the deadliest harm to Poland. It was he in fact, and he only, who in 1831, when Poland stood at bay crying out for help, refused to join France and Austria in the holy work of deliverance, who curbed the eagerness of the Vienna Cabinet, supplied the timorous statesmanship of Louis-Philippe with a plea for inaction, and so gave Poland over to the knife.

Facts like these are either too little known, or too often overlooked. It is worth our while to recall them, for the past can throw much useful light upon the present.

In 1831, while Poland with her broken chains was trying hard to smite her oppressors to the ground, Austria perceived, as she seems to do now also, that her real interests lay in forwarding the

restoration of Poland, as perhaps the only effectual safeguard in the future, alike for the Austrian Empire and the West of Europe, against the encroachments of Russia.

But what am I saying? Long before 1831, as far back as the close of 1814, this idea prevailed in the Cabinet of Vienna, and, in the minds of Austrian statesmen, mastered the temptation to keep hold of Austria's share in the spoils won by that highwayman's policy, the Partition of Poland.

We know that one of the four plans brought before the Vienna Congress was, the erecting of Poland *with its ancient frontiers* into an independent kingdom. And who supported Lord Castlereagh and Prince Talleyrand, the proposers of this arrangement? Who else indeed than Prince Metternich?

Nor is that a thing to astonish one. Strengthened and enlarged to a formidable extent by the conquest of Finland, by her acquisitions in Bessarabia, her victories on the side of Persia, had not Russia pushed forward from the banks of the Niemen into the very heart of Germany? Granted the Czar Alexander's claims to take charge of nearly the whole Duchy of Warsaw, to annex it to his other Polish domains, and to make out of the whole a Polish kingdom entirely subject to his sway, who was to prevent him, once master of the fortresses in the Duchy, from threatening the Austrian capital in the absence of any real frontier-line? Did not Russia incline towards the south-west; and if no watch was kept in that direction, would she not some day be rushing downwards with the force of an avalanche? And how if, spreading more and more along the Black Sea, and pressing more and more upon Turkey, she proceeded at last to surround Austria on the north, east, and south?

This was the thought which, from the outset of the famous negotiations that ended in the treaties of Vienna, must have been, and was, present to the mind of Prince Metternich. Again, even if the Duchy of Warsaw had, in accordance with one of the four plans put forward, been divided into three parts among the three powers who had concocted the unholy compact for the first partition, Austria would still be found to have concluded a sorry bargain. For with her the main point was, not to enlarge herself in this or that direction, but to guard against the risk of being herself sooner or later swallowed up! And to ward off that danger there was but one decisive way; the restoration of Poland as an independent state.

Unluckily Alexander was prepared to award himself the lion's share. Talleyrand's representations he met with the argument most dear to emperors, kings, czars, and all logicians who have cannon behind them: "*I have two hundred thousand men in the Duchy of Warsaw; drive me out if you can!*"

In hopes of somehow hindering the future development of this brutal abuse of strength, certain guarantees were bargained for, demanded at least as much by the interests of Europe as by those of Poland. These were, that the new kingdom should enjoy the blessing of a constitution; that it should have a separate administration; and so on. Illusive guarantees! Cobwebs in the way of a hornet! The events which are stirring all Europe at this very moment render all comment thereon needless.

To Austria, therefore, no less than to France and England, was addressed the noble and touching manifesto published by the Poles in 1831: "Convinced that our freedom and our independence, so far from being a threat to the surrounding States, have always served Europe as a rampart, and might now become more useful to her than ever, we take our stand before governments and peoples, in full belief that the voice of policy will speak out in our behalf as loudly as the voice of humanity. If Providence has doomed this land to eternal slavery; if in this last struggle Poland's liberties must be buried under the ruins of her towns and the bodies of her defenders, our enemy shall reign over mere deserts, and every good Pole in his last hour will enjoy the comfort of having, if but for a moment, guarded the imperilled liberties of Europe."

Accordingly, from that time Austria began to make earnest efforts to rescue Poland. Through the Austrian consul, who had never left Warsaw, the Polish Government learned that Austria was inclined to favour the re-establishment of the Polish nation upon two conditions: first, that Poland should accept an Austrian prince as king; second, that this proposal should be made conjointly by France and England. M. Walewski went off to sound the feelings, first of the Tuileries' Cabinet, afterwards of that of St. James's. The answer of the French Government to these overtures was not unfavourable,—and note that Louis-Philippe was then upon the throne! But what answer gave Lord Palmerston? The writer of the present letter was, if he does not deceive himself, the first to make publicly known,

through his *Histoire de Dix Ans*, the document in question, which cannot be too attentively considered. Here it is:

"The undersigned, &c., &c., in reply to the note presented to him by the French Ambassador, for the purpose of engaging the Government of Great Britain to interfere in concert with France in the affairs of Poland, in order to prevent bloodshed, and to obtain for that country a political and national existence,

"Has the honour to inform his Excellency Prince Talleyrand that, however disposed the King of Great Britain may be to concur with the King of the French in any measure tending to secure the peace of Europe, and more especially in any measure which would really succeed in putting an end to the war of extermination of which Poland is at this moment the theatre, His Majesty finds himself compelled to declare:

"That in the present state of things a simple mediation of the usual kind could not fail to be rejected by Russia, inasmuch as the Court of St. Petersburg has just refused propositions of this nature made to it by France; that consequently the intervention of the two Courts, in order to take effect, would have to be an intervention such as could be enforced in the event of a refusal on the part of Russia.

"That the King of England deems himself in no way bound to adopt this latter alternative, seeing that the frank and friendly relations which exist between the Court of St. Petersburg and His Majesty forbid his so doing. His Britannic Majesty is therefore compelled to decline the proposals transmitted by His Excellency Prince Talleyrand in his note of the 20th June (1831); being of opinion that the moment is not yet come for adopting them with success against the will of a sovereign whose rights are incontestable.

"In conclusion, His Majesty has charged the undersigned to acquaint His Excellency the French Ambassador with the deep sorrow that fills his breast, in beholding the havoc which has taken place in Poland, and to assure him that he will use every effort to stay its course that may be compatible with the friendly relations subsisting between him and Russia. Already have instructions been sent to His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg, to the effect that His Majesty will insist on the maintenance of Poland's political existence, as established in 1815, and on the maintenance of her national institutions.

(Signed) "PALMERSTON."

Thus thought, spoke, and acted the Lord Palmerston of 1831. Need I recal the fatal issues which his political forbearance entailed on heroic and unhappy Poland? Louis-Philippe was not the man to undertake single-handed the labours of a modern crusade, and Austria had declared beforehand that she would not stir without England. Once more therefore, to the disgrace of mankind, was Poland trampled under foot.

The question of this moment is to know if the Lord Palmerston of 1863 is still the same as the Lord Palmerston of 1831; and if on that supposition the England of to-day is prepared to tolerate what England tolerated then?

For myself I own that on these two points I gladly laid my reason open to suppositions that reassured my heart. Is it credible that late events in Poland should not have enlightened a man of Lord Palmerston's stamp, as to the impossibility of Poland's dying, and to the paramount interest which all Europe should feel in her surviving? Are we to believe that those burning protestations with which the House of Commons so lately resounded were worth almost less than the smoke which proclaims the fire! Are we to admit that a people who pride themselves on being *practical* would incur the reproach of letting their enthusiasm in a just cause evaporate in idle words and outbursts of barren sympathy; or, worse still, of having played at a comedy of indignation?

Such however, I grieve to say, are the accusations seemingly provoked by the do-nothing policy of the prime minister and the uncertain attitude of the nation. In the refusal of the English Government to act in concert with France, and to extend its action beyond isolated protests, there is something lamentable, and, to speak plainly, far from honourable. But if the nation willed to act in concert, the Government would certainly have to follow its lead. What does the nation will? For the present I doubt if it knows its own mind.

In plain truth, it takes alarm at the prospect of a war; and moreover, it shrinks from pledging itself to set out with Napoleon III. on a road which he might travel further perhaps than it would care to follow.

Let me add, however, that this feeling is not shared by the working classes, who display a manly resolution in all that concerns Poland. Last Friday a deputation appointed by a crowded meeting waited on Lord Palmerston, and urged him in the name

of the working classes to concert with the other powers for the resurrection of a free Poland. "It is war you want then?" was the old diplomatist's abrupt remark. "Ay, war, if it must be!" was their answer.

The answer was noble: that it was also supremely wise and well-judged, it now remains to show. In another letter I will try to do so, happy if I succeed in proving that the boasted prudence of the diplomatist is not so safe a guide as the instinct of a people.

LETTER CXXXV.

THE DREAD OF WAR AND POLAND.

March 18th, 1863.

YESTERDAY a great meeting, announced some days beforehand, took place in the Guildhall. It was to have been presided over by the Lord Mayor, but, owing to his illness at the time named, Sheriff Lawrence took the chair. The gathering was numerous and very animated; but what gave it a peculiar significance, was the presence of many political celebrities; representatives of the aristocracy, of the official world, members of the House of Lords, members of the House of Commons. There appeared, for instance, on the platform, Prince Azim-Jah, the Earl of Shaftesbury, Lord Harrowby, the Earl of Zetland, Lord Charles Fitzroy, Lord Truro, Lord Ebury, Colonel Wilson Patten, Colonel Stuart, Admiral King, Mr. David Urquhart, Sir G. Bowyer, Sir F. Goldsmid, Sir R. Clifton, Messrs. Pope Hennessy, G. Denman, A. Kinnaird, Abel Smith, H. Lewis, R. W. Crawford, &c., nearly all members of the House of Commons.

What are we to think of this meeting? What was the aim of the speeches there uttered? What may we hope from the resolutions there passed? Before answering these questions I must beg room for some observations which seem to me needful.

Shall I own it? I fear that, whenever we talk about England, we Frenchmen are too ready to adopt dark hypotheses. The phantoms of the past still haunt our minds. It is always the dismal burden, "Pitt and Coburg," at any rate "Pitt." I

am neither an "Anglomane" nor an "Anglophobe." I have lived long in this country, with the purpose of studying, with the desire to know it; I deem myself a dispassionate critic, and so, without pretending to absolve her from the reproach of national self-seeking, I cannot help feeling the absurdity of what people are so fond of saying in France about the depth of England's bad faith, her everlasting duplicity, the ceaseless machiavelism of her deeds.

It is likely that, in this Polish question, she was not sorry to see us attack a power so threatening to herself as Russia, without herself running the risk of a great venture; but, given the fatal principle which divides the great sections of the human family into nations jealous of one another, there is nothing in this sentiment peculiar to England.

As for the English Government, in so far as it obeys the inspirations of Lord Palmerston, I allow there is cause for distrusting it. Lord Palmerston is an English diplomatist of the old school; need I say more? But we should not forget that in this country opinion rules. In speaking of England, the word means, not this or that man, but England simply.

The question then before us is, to ascertain if it be fair to charge the English nation with having expressed such ardent sympathy for Poland, only with a view to laying a trap for us in pursuance of a treacherous calculation. The question is, to discover whether there be grounds for seeing only an act of national hypocrisy in the imposing demonstrations which have occurred and are occurring still.

Frankly, I think not. I reckon that the sympathy expressed by Englishmen towards despairing Poland is sincere, though found in company with the fears awakened by Russia's progress. But they dread a war; they dread it beyond measure; they dread it with a stupid dread, as if the best way of avoiding it were not to refrain from dreading it too much. That to my mind is the key to the position.

What a change has been wrought during the last few years in the temper of this country! Time was when England seemed to breathe nothing but battle. Pitt owed his popularity and his power to the strength of a passion never daunted by that dreadful idea, the setting fire to the world. To-day it is clear that England misdoubts her power. When the civil war that rent America gave England the promise of an easy prey, loud was the

cry for war that arose on this side the Atlantic; but before that time, how many affronts to her pride had England not gulped down in silence at the hands of the United States? In the Crimea she unsheathed her sword; but France was there too. In the case of Italy her efforts were confined to good wishes. And when the Empire rose on the morrow of the Coup d'Etat, what was her ruling anxiety, her daily torment, her nightly dream? The ghost of an invasion.

God forbid that, speaking generally, we should find fault with such a triumph of the peaceful spirit among a powerful people! Of all the ills that follow war, the slain men, plundered towns, mourning families, peoples parcelled out like vile cattle, the fountains of public wealth dried up, though perhaps the most serious, are not those which soonest possess the fancy, speak most feelingly to the heart, and affect material interests.

War has dangers which cannot safely be overlooked by an intelligent people, whether already free or eager to win its freedom. But while we should curse as the most horrible of scourges any war whose motive was ambition, whose principle warlike glory, whose aim conquest, it is neither noble nor safe to forget that justice has undoubted claims on force, that the oppression wielded against one people involves a challenge and a threat to all others, and that the rule of human mutuality cannot with impunity be set aside. Decision, moreover, economises danger. When two men come face to face, if one falls back, the other advances; and so it is with two nations. Excessive prudence invites danger yet more than temerity; and as one never treats by halves with injustice, the time comes when you have to choose between bearing all and forbidding all.

Thus, where England's sympathy with Poland seems wanting, is not in earnestness but in nobility. She would like, if she could, to indulge her enthusiasm without doing herself harm, to manifest a compassion which costs her nothing, to show herself upright on the cheapest terms.

This has been abundantly proved by the Guildhall meeting.

If it were possible to disarm or convert the Czar by proclaiming aloud on Poland's behalf Poland's right to live; if we could have done with the treaties of 1815 by simply, in sounding phrase, denouncing the robbery they served to sanction; if Poland could be saved by the simple reading of her martyrology in the ears of all the world, the speeches of Lord Harrowby, of

the Hon. G. Denman, of Mr. H. D. Seymour, of Lord Shaftesbury, would leave nothing to wish for. If the applause of an excited audience had power to silence the roar of guns, Russia at this moment would own herself beaten; for at this Guildhall meeting it was not the applause, thank Heaven, that ran short. But is it to be supposed that the Emperor Alexander will be induced to recall his armies from Warsaw when he reads in Lord Harrowby's speech, "In this country, I fear, we cannot do much;" or in that of the Hon. G. Denman, "I am not advocating war with Russia;" or in that of Lord Shaftesbury, "There is no need in these days to say, 'such is my opinion, and I am ready to follow it up with a blow?'"

The *Times* makes merry to-day over the Guildhall meeting, on the plea that any agitation must of course be barren, which cares to shield itself under declarations like these. The *Times* is wrong, but only because it goes too far. If guns are a power, public opinion is a power also. Uttered loudly, clearly, with one voice, it could not be wholly ineffective. Had the meeting at Guildhall no other result than to spur on the English government, there would be room for self-gratulation. Besides, we must fairly allow that vigorous words have been spoken, while the warmth with which they were received proves clearly enough how far they entered into the hearers' hearts. Declarations of the highest moment have been made and passionately applauded. Did not Sir H. Hoare exclaim, "What! Leave the noble insurgents of Poland to be trampled under foot?—let silence reign in Warsaw? No, let us have war first!" The first resolution carried declares "that in violating her engagements with regard to Poland, and in replacing them with a system of confiscation, proscription, and massacres, *Russia has lost all right to the possession of Poland.*" The second proposes "the cessation of all diplomatic intercourse with Russia, until this state of things shall have terminated." That is by no means an empty jingling of cymbals; and if the moral power of opinion deserved commemorating only by the laughter of the *Times*, of what would that journal itself be the representative, passing as it does for opinion's best accredited organ? Why, it would represent nothing at all.

True it is, however, that in the Guildhall gathering so strong a stress was laid on the fear of war, as to take away much of their virtue from declarations so fervently, so unanimously voted.

Nevertheless, if there is a question whose difficulties are worth facing boldly, with firm, unflinching heart, it is this tragical, this momentous question of Poland. It would be so, even if it concerned only justice, which is the most real as it is the noblest of interests. How much more, when you think upon the bond that unites the well-being of Poland and the safety of Europe!

LETTER CXXXVI.

THE MEETING AT GUILDHALL ON THE SUBJECT OF POLAND.

March 18th, 1863.

THE meeting which has just taken place at Guildhall, with Sheriff Lawrence in the chair—the Lord Mayor having been suddenly indisposed—demonstrates two things: first, that the English feel a very lively sympathy for Poland; secondly, that they are dreadfully afraid of war.

All that could be said about the hateful character of the three successive partitions, which tore Poland to shreds and will for ever disgrace the eighteenth century; about Russia's breach of the treaties which promised some guarantees to the unhappy Poles; about the oppression which is always weighing on them, their touching resignation at first, their subsequent despair, the heroism of their final revolt,—all that has certainly been said by Lord Harrowby, the Hon. G. Denman, the Earl of Shaftesbury, and the other speakers who got a hearing; said too in phrases stamped with genuine emotion, amidst the passionate applause of a large, an imposing audience. But when there arose the question, the decisive question, What shall England do?—no practical deduction was given to the grief so fervently poured out, to the indignation which had vented itself in such fearful anathemas. "Unhappily"—exclaimed one—"we can do nothing." "Far be it from me"—said another—"to maintain that we are bound even to make a fight for it." "In the present day"—remarked a third—"the power of opinion is itself sufficient for the triumph of a just cause." And Lord Shaftesbury avowed, or went very near avowing, his belief that, since God fought for the Poles, it was best to leave Him alone, God having no need of a helper.

Such being the case, what of real value belongs to the resolutions of the meeting?

The first affirms that the Emperor of Russia by his treatment of the Poles has lost all right to the possession of Poland. But, in the first place, he could not lose a right which, morally speaking, he never had; and, in the next, what matters to him the opinion of these gentlemen on such a point, if that opinion may not be translated into deeds, and if they themselves have carefully assured him to that effect?

The second resolution proposes by way of a threatening measure the stoppage of all diplomatic intercourse, until a remedy has been applied to the sufferings of Poland. But not to speak of the vagueness marking such a proposal, what else can it mean save the first step towards war?

There is something childish in the notion of disarming or frightening the Czar by assurances that die out in talk and by threats avowedly barren of effective issues. The opinion of a great people, of such a people as this, undoubtedly carries weight in the scale of human affairs; but it does so chiefly because we know that such opinion answers to a considerable degree of power. It is pushing simplicity very far indeed, to imagine that the heart of an autocrat can be touched by piteous allusions to the sad results of oppression, or frightened by our making over to Heaven the task of conquering him; and one is tempted to ask if that sort of policy can have been seriously recommended to a nation which plumes itself on being eminently *practical*. It is very well for England to offer her moral support to the Poles; but a people engaged in a contest fearfully unequal, against oppressors ready, as Prince Gortschakoff declared, to *exterminate* it, has need of some more real support. The sympathy shown by England in the cause of Italian independence would never, I imagine, have given Lombardy to Victor-Emmanuel and amended that part of the map of Europe, if the guns of Solferino had not had something to do with the matter.

Those English journals with whom the Guildhall meeting has found favour, seek to justify the indignant but passive attitude therein assigned to the people of England, by remarking that the Polish insurgents ask and look for nothing more, that no other kind of help would suit them, that they scout the idea of active interference by the governments of Europe, that they deem themselves equal to their own defence, that Langiewicz has not

even accepted the offer of a sword so famed for victory as that of Garibaldi, and that a nation which cannot conquer its own independence would be incapable of preserving it.

Selfish sophistry this, and nothing more! A conversation which I had last night with an emissary of the insurrection enables me to refute it all.

It is not true that the Poles in arms refuse such help as could be offered them. The real truth is very different; namely, that from a feeling of generous pride which does them honour, they forbear from *asking* for help. It is true, moreover, that they are not for a show of independence bought by concessions such as the policy of Courts would perhaps be inclined to thrust upon them. Diplomacy does but too often spoil what it touches; and a nation which would render up its freedom in return for the alms-gift of its independence, would deserve to enjoy neither of those precious boons?

But does it follow that they who love justice, who hate oppression, and would clap their hands at the resurrection of Poland, are right to content themselves with barren prayers? Does it follow that a nation of the first order like the English should care so little for its dignity, as to tolerate what it calls a crime, and to avow before all the world that its sympathy shall not avail those who have aroused it?

What else remains to be said? Is not the question of Poland essentially a European question? What other barrier would be strong enough to guard Western Europe against the inroads of the Muscovite Power, than Poland re-established within her ancient borders? Austria, whom Russia is stealthily enfolding, and would hold as it were in the hollow of her hand on the day when, sole mistress of the Black Sea, she began knocking at the gates of Constantinople,—has Austria no interest in the maintenance of a barrier fit to keep back a power whose march slopes south-westward? As for England, what need to show her the bond that connects the safe possession of India with the restoration of Poland?

If justice therefore fails to inspire England with courage equal to her sympathy, let her listen at least to the voice of self-interest.

Perhaps she trusted, for the restoration of Poland, to the blows which Napoleon might be tempted to strike, while she herself spent nothing, either in men or money? Such a calculation would be absurd.

The Emperor's interference, if shrouded in any way beneath the interference of Europe, would not wear a very dangerous aspect. It would be hard for Napoleon, as a member of a coalition in which Austria and England would stand beside him, to turn the sympathy of France and the emotion engendered throughout Europe, to the account of his own personal schemes. Allied with England and Austria in the Polish question, he never could demand the banks of the Rhine as the price of his zeal in defending a just cause; never turn a crusade into a plea for a conquest. But would it be the same thing if, relying on the warm and, this time, unanimous adhesion of France, grasping at a very fair excuse for withdrawing from the entanglements of the Mexican expedition, concluding a peace with Juarez, and calling on the legions who have made Italy to make Poland, Napoleon were to come forward single-handed, as the foe of unrighteousness too long unpunished, the champion of right down-trodden, the protector of Europe? What would England gain by the opening thus offered for playing a part so imposing to a man who ever since his accession has kept her a prey to incessant panics, and driven her to find fresh safeguards in the volunteer movement? Who cannot see the moral force which the empire, having to wage a war of this kind, would draw from the very fact of its armed isolation? Who fails to comprehend the brilliance of the part which England would find herself to have thus secured, for a principle the rival of that which it is her glory to represent in the world? To her, to her especially, belongs the right of seeing that freedom shall not be dishonoured, that its influence shall receive no harm, that no one shall be warranted in accusing free governments of selfishness or want of power.

LETTER CXXXVII.

POLAND HALF FORSAKEN.

March 23rd, 1863.

I was in the midst of reporting to you the impression produced in England by the recent debate in the Senate, and by the speeches of Prince Napoleon and M. Billault, when the fatal news came to my knowledge. The pen fell from my hand. At

the same moment I learned from the journal which had just been brought to me, that M Billault's speech was an expression of the Emperor's own thoughts, and that evidence thereof lay in the *Moniteur;* evidence evinced by a letter which the Emperor himself had written to M. Billault. After that I could but throw my nearly finished letter into the fire.

How shall I translate to you the comments called forth here among the friends of Poland by the oration of the minister without office, seeing that such comments, following the letter in question, would be found ranging high above the minister's own head?

The *Daily News* of the day before yesterday said, "Janus had two faces but only one temple. Now, according to the French proverb, 'a door should be either open or shut:' unluckily, between Prince Napoleon and M. Billault, the gates of the French temple of Janus remain half open." To-day, however, no more uncertainty on this head: the gates of the temple of Janus have lost their equivocal position. There lies the Emperor's letter to M. Billault; and at the same instant we learn that Langiewicz, beaten by the Russians, is now a prisoner in Austrian hands.

Alas! shall I own it? I tremble lest news so dismal will relieve the heart of England from an enormous weight. How many people on this side the Channel saw us already taking by the hand the cause which England seemingly had half forsaken, doing for Poland what we had done for Italy, re-awakening the glorious France of the Crusades *without* their superstition and *with* the principle of human solidarity, punishing the oppressor, rescuing the oppressed, throwing out a barrier against the threatened encroachments of Russia, for the benefit and amidst the applause of all Europe; in this way centupling our moral strength and, as Fate placed the King of Prussia in our path, enforcing our well-won right to demand back the frontier of the Rhine as a reward for guarding the right, for avenging justice, for ensuring the safety of Europe! These apprehensions, whatever may be thought of them, are now dispelled. Right or wrong as she may have been, England has ceased to fear the shadow of a humbling contrast. In this respect she is altogether satisfied.

Not that I would question the interest she takes in Poland. I have owned and I repeat my belief in the full sincerity of her sympathy, as hitherto displayed; but once resolved to do nothing that might lead to strife, she would naturally be loth to see a

rival power assume the magnificent part which herself had shrunk from attempting, and reap its profits after having despised its dangers. In talking of dangers, I mean those which hang over a people in time of war; for it is understood that mainly in this direction points England's fear. What! Another addition to the taxes! Such is the cry that breaks from every Englishman's lips, as often as the maintenance of peace becomes problematical.

Would you know how far England counted on not being eclipsed by France in this great Polish question? You have only to observe how complacently the English journals have dwelt upon the circumstances which, to their thinking, were likely to convince the world of the lukewarm interest taken by France in Poland. Did they not count upon their fingers, with ironic smiles, the number of signatures appended to the petitions? Did they not ask in tones of banter if that was all we had to show in evidence of our brotherly love for a people whose blood, mingled with ours, had flowed on so many fields of battle?

At the very moment of my writing, some of the Liberal papers, such as the *Morning Advertiser*, are announcing on the faith of their correspondents, that the Parisians outside the schools and the workshops are very little concerned about Langiewicz and his comrades; that, faithful to their frivolous customs, they have followed with careless eyes the ups and downs of a heroic struggle; that their attention is absorbed by the kind of drama for which the house of Mademoiselle Barucci has served as a stage, and by the adventures more or less pungent of the *demi-monde;* that this indifference of the French to all that concerns Poland is an ascertained fact of which there can be no kind of doubt. It is for you, sir, being on the spot, to deal with these allegations; for myself, it is my duty to note them, because they prove that those people have played in France the game of England, who like M. de la Rochejaquelein fancied they were playing for the benefit of order.

Shall I tell you of the way in which the tidings of Langiewicz's misfortune have been received? Alas, for the baneful power of accomplished facts, for the hateful magic of success!

And first of all, it is wonderful to see how many deep thinkers, how many wise spectators have suddenly discovered that they foresaw and foretold that such an insurrection would of necessity be crushed, that the sublime was folly, that the insurgents might perchance hold out in the shelter of the woods, but would cer-

tainly be lost whenever they ventured on giving battle. Let us leave these prophets and their mouthpiece, the *Morning Herald*, to congratulate themselves on their wisdom, and while the situation shapes itself out a little better, let us try to puzzle out from the earlier utterances of the English press the sentiments of the public it represents.

With the exception of the *Daily News*, which cannot bring itself to believe in the magnanimity of the Emperor Alexander, whose "benevolence, humanity, and conciliatory disposition have ended," according to M. Billault, "in an insurrection"—a good reason apparently for doubting henceforward the virtue of such a disposition—every one of the journals now before me, beginning with the *Times*, proclaims its trust in the Czar's generosity.

Yesterday, by their showing, he belonged to the family of oppressors. To-day, they are looking to see him reproduce the part of Corneille's Augustus; "*Prends un siége, Cinna.*" On this point the *Times* talks like the *France*, the *Morning Herald* like the *Constitutionnel*. How excellent an opening for Alexander II. to show off his virtues! Now that he has done with the insurrection, now or never is the moment for binding himself to respect the treaties of 1815. Now then, let him publish a decree of amnesty; let the gaurantees so often promised to the Poles be once more promised to better purpose, and all will be forgotten, all done away. This very insurrection which but yesterday was still declared to be the lawful child of oppression and despair, will but have served to shed fuller light on the clemency of the Czar; men enough have perished to warrant the interment of the Polish question in the same grave with their dead bodies; and the *Times* is ready to exclaim with General Sebastiani of old, "Order reigns in Warsaw."

With regard to the praises due to the Emperor Alexander in his relations with Poland, I leave the English press of yester evening to answer the English press of to-day; and Prince Napoleon, if he pleases, may take on himself to answer M. Billault. But what I cannot help pointing out is the blindness of those English journals which deem it possible to establish a lasting peace between Russia and a Poland Russianised by force. Allowing for a moment that the rebellion is suppressed, a matter strongly insisted on, however as yet unfounded; supposing further that an amnesty will be granted, that Poland will enjoy a separate government, that she will be endowed with the constitution which,

according to the Vienna treaties, alone should bind her to the Russian empire—can any one seriously believe that by these means the problem will have been solved at last? Is it thus we may count on seeing uprooted from the Polish heart that deathless love of country, which has been so often asserted by so many heroic sacrifices, with a power that never fades, in spite of hindrances great and many? What else is needed to prove the impossibility of Poland's dying, if ample proof has not yet been given to the world in the amazing spectacle of her miraculous, her long-protracted agony? What concessions can be made her which she would not be tempted, and righteously tempted, to convert into the means of her deliverance? Who can wipe out the remembrance of the massacres, murders, plunderings, that have marked this war? Who can wash away all that blood? Do men realise the existence of a nation of *suspects?*

People boast of the good intentions of the Emperor Alexander. What argument more striking, more conclusive, could be imagined for the restoration of Poland? For, in short, if Alexander's good intentions have led by some necessity to the same horrors as were produced by the brazen policy of his father; if the liberal ideas which led the son of Nicholas to desire the emancipation of Russian serfs have had no other effect in Poland than the trampling under horses' hoofs a multitude kneeling before a crucifix, and the wider prevalence of a proscription under the name of a conscription, what more remains to be proved?

I wonder that the *Times*, and the journals in its train, are so bent on seeking the cure for all these ills in a diplomatic representation addressed to the Czar, that henceforth he will be good enough, with regard to his Polish subjects, to pay a little more respect to the treaties of 1815; as if those treaties, so often mended, so often broken, so often convicted of weakness and want of forecast, still formed the public law of Europe! It might at least be resolved to back up the representation with threats in the event of the former being disregarded. But what answer did Lord Palmerston make only yesterday to Mr. Hennessy, who declared that England, as a party to the treaties of 1815, was bound in honour to save Poland from suffering through their violation? He said, that England, having guaranteed nothing, was not strictly bound to do anything. Since every one allows that the Czar is lawful master of the Poles, what right have we to prescribe the way in which he should govern them? In

October, 1814, when Lord Castlereagh sent to Alexander I. certain remonstrances similar to those now suggested, the latter wrote to the giver of advice: "As for what concerns the care I owe to my own subjects, and my duty towards them, that is my business."

The truth is, that one cannot hope to solve the question without taking courage to view it from its larger side. The partition of Poland was a crime, and the sanctioning of that partition, or its effects, was a crime also. Right cannot be born of crime.

I repeat, in conclusion, that the rebellion has not spoken its last word. Last Saturday a ship left England, to my personal knowledge, with two hundred Poles on board, going forth to win back their country or fall in her service. I was talking yesterday with one of the representatives of this heroic rising. His face was calm; in his words breathed a faith superior to all disasters. I spoke to him of Langiewicz, of the gravity here attached to his defeat. He answered: "See what sad effects one false step is sure to bring after it! Langiewicz should never have proclaimed himself Dictator. He has thereby made Europe believe that he and Poland are one and the same thing. I hope we shall undeceive Europe." And he repeated the words of the *Daily Telegraph:* "Poland did not die with Kosciusko; she will not die with Langiewicz."

LETTER CXXXVIII.

A RIOT AT STALYBRIDGE.

March 27th, 1863.

"It is all over!" say the optimists, as they talk of the riot at Stalybridge: a riot born of the crisis which keeps the cotton-districts of England at the last gasp.

Ah! it is all over, is it? That is not my opinion. But first let us look at the facts.

When, in December of last year, it was shown that out of the two million inhabitants of the Manchester district, the number of unfortunate beings reduced to living on aid had risen to nearly two hundred and sixty thousand, and that to this heart-breaking total might be added a hundred and seventy-two thousand people fed by local committees, so that public charity had to find bread

for four hundred and thirty-two thousand human beings—or one in every five,—there was felt from end to end of England a mighty emotion, followed by as mighty an effort. A Central Relief Committee was promptly organised and set at work. The Lord Mayor of London made himself a kind of banker to the famished ones of Lancashire, who could turn eyes of hope towards the Mansion-House. Subscriptions were opened everywhere: lords, shopkeepers, workmen, rich and poor, all answered to the call: from the Queen down to the youngest member of the little shoe-black brigade, each sent his offering. Funds flowed in: England is so wealthy! Ere long there was found to have been collected the sum of £540,000 sterling.

That was certainly a great deal, and yet it was very little, seeing how wide and deep a wound had been laid open in the nation's side. But enthusiasm prevailed, and the continuance of the evil had not tired out the constancy of the sufferers. The working men, whose arms the crisis had just disabled, astonished every one by the greatness of their resignation. The papers re-echoed with their praises. England through all her mouth-pieces proclaimed her pride in such a race of children. Thus upheld, heartened, encouraged by the warmth of the interest they aroused, these latter betrayed a lofty reluctance to apply for the proffered aid; accepted it only at the last extremity, and then accepted it with earnest thanks.

But from that time certain observers, amongst whom was the writer of these lines, shook their heads with an air of sorrow, amazed that the need of meeting the results of a national calamity was not regarded as the national *business*, and that social foresight, committing itself to the inspirations of private charity, had abdicated in presence of the unforeseen.

There are some evils, in fact, to which we cannot apply the remedy of almsgiving without exposing ourselves to cruel misunderstandings.

At the outset all goes well; donations flow in; their distribution is effected by individuals who eagerly offer their gratuitous services for the purpose, an exchange of kindly sentiments is established between those who give and those who receive; the former would blush to fail in courtesy; the latter would be ashamed to incur the reproach of ingratitude. But the longer the crisis lasts, the gloomier grows by degrees the face of affairs. The courage once displayed by the sufferers expends itself little

by little against their sufferings, as iron against the file. No longer hearing the sounds of applause once lavished on their resignation, aware that public charity, besought by other needs and drawn away towards other objects, is slackening towards themselves, seeing no visible end to the rough path they have to follow, they are filled with discouragement. Then arise dark suspicions; then are heard bitter recriminations, which agitators inflame by their speeches:—

"Why does society, viewed as society, forsake us, to the extent of compelling us to hold out our hands for alms? Have we no claim on the watchful care of its official representatives? In presence of a calamity whose causes are so general, whose results are so dreadful and threaten to last so long, can public authorities do nothing but fold their arms and see us perish? Of what use all this relief, so insufficient, notwithstanding all the boasts made about it? It prolongs our days only to prolong our ills. It humiliates us too; it testifies to our social inferiority; it crushes us with the weight of our dependence; it reminds us that under the empire of laws made without us, and before our time, our destiny drifts at the mercy of other men's wills. We want no bread of charity, we want the bread of labour: have they ever for one moment tried to assure us that? No: the care of saving half a million of men from either languishing in beggary or perishing of hunger is unworthy to count among the anxious thoughts of our lawgivers, and runs counter to the doctrine of fashionable economists. They prefer to make us feel how little we are worth, by compelling us to live on the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table, when he chooses to let them fall, so that our distress becomes an occasion for boasting of the benevolence of the fortunate ones of the earth; a beneficence which only serves to gild our chains!"

Yes, such is the language they are brought to utter; and presently they come to receive with wrath and threats the alms they at first accepted with gratitude.

The relief-committees in their turn grow weary and irritable. Nothing at the beginning could equal their activity, their kindness, their desire to render the help more acceptable by dint of engaging manners and soft words. But in their case also disgust follows not long after zeal. The complaints with which they are besieged, the discontent of which they are witnesses, the annoyances of daily contact with men whom misery sours and their

unduly prolonged dependence tends to degrade, the fraudulent doings and idle habits thence begotten, the importunings of some, the murmurings of others, all combine to render the relief-committees more and more suspicious, formal, and distant. Their intercourse gets embittered to the raging point, and hatred reaps where charity had sown.

I have thus written the history of the general causes which produced the Stalybridge riot. The special and immediate causes are as follows :—

The relief-committee, for want of sufficient funds, had resolved to diminish the portion allotted to each working man in distress by fourpence a day ; and to make sure that they who drew the relief would not squander it on drink instead of buying bread therewith, it had settled that the relief should thenceforth be given, not in silver, but in tickets, exchangeable for bread and potatoes at certain specified shops.

These two measures combined, obviously tended to render the position of the relieved, not only more painful, but humiliating. The discontent among the working men was extreme. They protested against the insulting precautions aimed at themselves ; they resented very warmly the annoyance of being unable at need to get a few drops of gin for the old mother, or a trifle for the babe in arms whose cries had to be lulled ; they affirmed, moreover, that the tickets they were to present leaving them no power to choose, the tradesman took his advantage by forcing them to buy, not what suited them, but what it suited him to get off his hands. The ferment increasing hour by hour, meetings were held at which the conduct of the committees was denounced with vehemence, and "the indifference of Government" treated as barbarous. Among other offensive precautions taken by the Stalybridge committee, one consisted in marking the clothes sent by the charitable, which implied that the receivers were capable of selling them and getting drunk with the proceeds. "Were the people ever insulted in a more audacious fashion ?" cried out from his pulpit a Methodist preacher named Stephens. "And what right have the committees over the presents remitted to them ? Do they not belong to those for whom the giver meant them, and to them alone ?" Another day the same preacher displayed before his congregation a pair of old tattered trousers, saying, "This is what they call relieving the people !"

An explosion was to be foreseen : it has taken place. On the

20th March, at Stalybridge, a raging crowd, composed mainly of Irish, threw themselves on the provision-stores of the committee, laid hands on all they contained, broke the windows, and committed all kinds of disorders. A detachment of cavalry quartered at Ashton was hastily summoned, the streets were scoured, and the town to a late hour of the night was paraded by patrols. On the morrow were seen fresh gatherings. That time the rioters took the road to Ashton, crying "Bread, bread!" and plundering or threatening the bakers' shops on their way. The Riot Act was read, and it became necessary to have recourse to a charge of dragoons. The rioters numbered about three thousand, including women and children. Scattered by the dragoons, they reassembled and directed their steps to Duckinfield. The police interfering found themselves assailed with a shower of stones, one of which struck the magistrate, Mr. Mason. The hussars rode up with sabres raised, and charged, but without striking any one. Had infantry been employed a massacre must have taken place. Luckily an English mob, as the *Spectator* truly observes, has a terrible dread of cavalry; and, thanks to this circumstance, the people were dispersed without any attempt to dispute the ground.

Let me add, that to this hour the movement has not spread, as there was reason to fear, to the surrounding towns. But it is certain that everywhere in these parts may be heard a dull rumbling of indignation. At Stockport, at Wigan, in many other towns, threatening symptoms have already shown themselves. The magistrates are on the alert. One dreads to think that the revolt may yet have to be suppressed by force. Here turns up the eternal and mournful question, "What is to be done?" Useless to try and conceal the extent of the evil: at this moment there are reckoned to be not fewer than four hundred and fifty thousand working-men dependent altogether for daily food either on the poor-rates or the efforts of private charity. But the poor-rate is levied in part on a class itself likely to stand in great need of help; and private charity, too, has its limits. Yes, a few months, and what is called the Charitable Relief Fund will have ceased to be a resource upon which it would be prudent to count. To crown the disaster, there is no hope that the class of working-men to whom cotton furnished so gainful an employment will be better off for a long time to come. Competent judges declare that even if all the cotton in the South came to Liverpool, it would be impossible to find work for more than three-fourths of the people

who were employed before the crisis, and impossible also to reward their labour as it used to be in those times: for, not to speak of the economy henceforth imperative on the manufacturers in issuing from the ruinous crisis they are now passing through, if indeed they ever do succeed in issuing from it, the production of manufactured cotton ought, under pain of entailing fresh disasters, to measure its activity in stricter proportion to the needs of the consumer. It is a mistake to fancy that the crisis from which Lancashire is suffering so cruelly has resulted solely from the American war. Long before the outbreak of the war in America that crisis was foreseen, as the inevitable consequence of excessive production. In a letter written to the *Times* by Mr. Edmund Potter we find the upward growth of England's cotton industry expressed in the following figures. He is treating of the yearly exports:—

1830	£19,418,855
1840	24,654,293
1850	28,257,401
1855	34,779,141
1860	51,959,185

The only reason which makes Mr. E. Potter believe that this enormous increase is not exaggerated, is that other industries can be quoted whose growth has been no less swift. Needless to dwell on such an argument. Of any given industry there is but one way of ascertaining the proof as to its being kept within prudent bounds: is there a fair balance between production and consumption? There lies the question, and there only. Now, by the confession of several manufacturers in Manchester whom I have questioned on this point, the great bound taken in England by the cotton-manufacture had long been leading directly to a glut in the market.

To conclude: the war in America is not yet over. And who knows when it will be over? And then, even supposing that that war alone has to answer for the cotton crisis which is overwhelming Lancashire, very dark are the clouds still hanging over that future which the unemployed working men of these districts, once so prosperous, have now before their eyes. Once more, what is to be done?

This question England hesitates to answer, nor knows, I fear, how to answer it. In another letter I will tell you why.

LETTER CXXXIX.

THE CRISIS IN THE COTTON TRADE, AND THE PRINCIPLE OF LETTING ALONE.

April 2nd, 1863.

In my last letter I touched upon a question of very serious import for England; a question which may be put in these terms:—

Ought England to try and save her cotton manufacture, or, seeing it threatened with extinction, must she make up her mind and act accordingly?

It was said in the *Times* of the 22nd of January, 1861, "The number of our countrymen who depend on the cotton manufacture for their daily bread is reckoned at nearly four millions, that is, at a sixth of the whole population of Great Britain. To form an idea of the place filled by this branch of industry in our foreign trade, it is enough to remember that in 1859 a third of our exports consisted of manufactured cotton."

At that time, you see, the *Times* attached supreme importance to the well-being of the cotton industry. What is its language to-day? It is but a few days since it expressed itself in this wise:—"Consult what work you please on statistics, McCulloch, for instance, and you will see that the cotton manufacture is computed to maintain directly 500,000 working men, and, directly or indirectly, 1,200,000 persons, men, women, and children. The capital circulating in wages is supposed to be £8,000,000, and the masters' yearly profit is reckoned at £13,000,000. This is undoubtedly an important interest, though less important, after all, than many others which make no claim to the favour of special patronage, as if testifying to their superior virtue or intelligence; and which, moreover, do not periodically produce heaps of paupers simultaneously with upstart millionaires."

Whence comes this unexpected change in the opinions and language of the *Times* with regard to the cotton manufacture? What! only two years ago that industry was England's bone and marrow; it must be maintained at all costs; and now with what an air is it vilipended!

The cotton industry is at this moment—cries the *Times* trium-

phantly—"as though it had never been." For all that, we are not dead yet. And, according to the most influential paper in the country, the best way of getting over the crisis in Lancashire is by opening out to the working population of Lancashire all the great doors of emigration!

Why so much haste to get rid of so grave a question? And why get rid of it by a sentence of death against so important an industry? Can it be true, as some think, that all this means at bottom a great class and party manœuvre? Can it be true that, by the dispersion of so large a mass of intelligent men, certain people would like to deal a blow at democracy, and break, as it were, its backbone? Can it be true, on the other hand, that the aristocracy of wealth, whose original cradle and present head-quarters are at Manchester, keeps the other aristocracy from sleeping, and that the political rivalry of the *cotton lords* sorely disgusts those other lords?

I told you of the Stalybridge riots. At the present moment order is restored, so far at least that the cries of a furious mob are hushed, and the swords have returned to their scabbards. But the disease of which the outbreak was only a symptom, that disease has not yet disappeared. How are we to cure it?

In the first place, no one believes that things can long remain in their present condition. The contributions of public charity are getting used up at a terrible pace. It would be madness to reckon on the fruitfulness of appeals incessantly renewed, Moreover, that is a frightfully unwholesome state of things which shows us so many working men reduced to eating the bread of charity. If the compulsory idleness in which they live had no other effect than to extinguish at last in them all feeling of personal dignity, there would be ground enough for trembling at the consequences: how much more if, combined with sufferings whose end none can foresee, it inspired them with wild indignation?

"Wait, still wait," say the optimists: "let us take time for our helper; let us leave things to return imperceptibly to their due level; perhaps the American war is nearer its conclusion than we think."

Perhaps! Alas! it is just in this alarming *perhaps* that the difficulty lies. Patience must have its recognised limits. The traveller on a road whose length he knows not, cannot bargain beforehand with fatigue. The Stalybridge outbreak is an

ominous warning, and very rash would they be who should feel warranted in sleeping calmly because, on one first occasion, the multitude fled before the flashing of a few drawn swords, without leaving any dead upon the field. To call out the military against want is a process of doubtful efficacy when the wretched count by hundreds of thousands. Thanks to the flow of donations, hunger has not yet found occasion to utter its savage counsels to the working men of Lancashire; but whenever that day shall come, the fear of a sabre-cut will have vanished. And then?

On the other hand, how are you to look cheerfully on the spirit of rebellion? After the Stalybridge riot, the Lord Mayor hastened to send the local committee five hundred pounds, urging the need of yielding to the people's wishes,—of substituting the distribution of money for the distribution of tickets. The feeling which inspired that step was humane, was just; but was there nothing dangerous in the step itself? To pay a riot is hardly the way to discourage it.

If it was only a matter concerning some hundreds of working men out of work and of working men fit to turn themselves to any kind of occupation, it could be borne with. But we have to deal with half a million of workers, whom cotton has long since moulded exclusively to its own uses, and who are little suited to other kinds of work. And these half-a-million of men are gathered together in a space comparatively narrow; they form an army, an army quivering with excitement, which it becomes less and less possible to feed, and which it is quite impossible to disband.

There is a great peril to turn aside, a great problem to solve, and time presses. Now, up to this moment, the public interest has been divided between two systems only: one which regards the distress as permanent and seeks a remedy in the emigration of the famishing from Lancashire; the other which regards the distress as temporary, and falls back upon the principle of state interference to bring the crisis to an end.

The former of these systems, which is earnestly recommended by the *Times*, and which seems to have public opinion with it, offers beyond doubt many advantages. The emigration, facilitated by means of a certain sum of money, would relieve public charity of a burden the increase of which in the present state of things appears to be indefinite; it would cut short with respect to the unemployed the corrupting influences of idleness maintained on

alms; it would tend in a given time to raise the level of wages by diminishing the number of workers. It was by employing a like remedy that Ireland in analogous circumstances was saved. And then, too, whether we will or no, is not that the point to which we must come, failing any visible issue to what the English so forcibly call the "cotton famine"?

Such are the pleas uttered in behalf of emigration. But how many the objections, and how forcible!

Not to speak of the enormous sacrifice in money demanded by such a measure, if it were applied on a scale at all proportioned to the needs of the situation, what effect could it possibly have but to ruin for ever in England the manufacture which so long figured among the chief sources of her prosperity and her power? The path of emigration once marked out, we should expect to see it straightway entered by those working men who had most confidence in themselves, namely, by the best trained, the most skilful. Who will replace them? And how long a time would it need to replace them? The manufacture of cotton demands, if one may so speak, an education of fingers only attainable with long practice. Before the new workers were fitted profitably to fill up the void left by the withdrawal of the old ones, the manufacture would have been found to have emigrated along with the emigrants. Emigation, then, is one of those remedies which kill the patient in order to kill the disease.

And indeed it is under this aspect that the *Times* seems to regard this question, when it says with astounding serenity, "England would not cease to live simply because cotton ceased to be." Of course not; but she would run the hazard of a life less strong, less flourishing. Strictly speaking, a man can live with one arm; does it follow that he would care nothing about two? That remark is the *Spectator's*, and I find it strikingly just. When some great industry dies out of a country, the chances that threaten its prosperity are multiplied by reason of that very narrowing of the base on which that prosperity rests. It is a chord with a smaller arc, and it is not true that what is lost by the disappearance of one industry is gained by the increase of others.

One consideration which it is important to keep in view is, that an immense capital has been invested in cotton manufactures. The fixed immovable portion of that capital would be irretrievably ruined. Nor is that all. Cotton maintains indirectly by the circulation of wages a whole population of small tradesmen,

whom the emigration would plunge into misery by carrying their customers abruptly away. What would become of the rent of cottages? Mr. Edmund Potter rates at twenty shillings a head yearly the rent paid by every working man in Lancashire. A hundred and fifty thousand working men the fewer, would constitute a yearly loss of £150,000. The disaster, in this county, would thus reach all classes. Lancashire, which, in a few years, cotton has turned into a manufacturing district the most active, the most populous, the wealthiest in the world, would become again an agricultural county, with a soil less profitably farmed and more heavily taxed than Suffolk.

There remains the second scheme, proposed by Mr. E. Potter, as mouthpiece of the mill-owners. According to Mr. Potter, the Legislature ought to step in with a loan of five or six million pounds, to be employed, not in paying for the idleness of working men, victims of the crisis, but in employing them one way or another, until the crisis has passed away.

This plan is evidently founded on the supposition that the evil is temporary, that it is only a question of gaining time and preventing the dissolution of forces already organised, with a view to having them in hand whenever the looms shall be once more set in motion. To use Mr. Potter's expression, there is in Lancashire a beautiful and powerful human mechanism, which must not be left to rust for want of oil, if we would preserve it, and which must at any price be preserved.

Unluckily, if there is a system likely to run counter to the whole force of English ideas, it is this. Scarcely had it been put forward, when shouts of alarm began to re-echo. State intervention! Good Heavens! Perish the colonies rather than a principle! Shall the Legislature vote a loan to save a particular industry? What a disastrous precedent to establish! Is it needful that whenever any branch of human activity suffers, the State shall come to its aid? Let every one get out of a scrape as he best can. Each for himself, each in his own place. If the cotton manufacture had no strength in itself to live, apparently its death is a blessing.

The objections made to Mr. Potter's propositions are characteristic. England's nature is all shown therein. Talk not in this country of solidarity: Englishmen know not what it means. They have not the word; they are ignorant of the thing. Charity, however, they admit; nay, more, they practise it to a greater ex-

tent than any country in the world. But why? Because charity is an act of individual power on the part of him who renders it, and implies no right in him on whom it is bestowed.

Can a community rest without danger on the strict, stern, exclusive application of a doctrine by which social duty is utterly sacrificed to the supremacy of the individual? As a proof that it cannot, England has been led to give herself, in the poor-laws, one of the most glaring contradictions ever recorded in history.

It is curious to see which side she will take in the question I have just been expounding. The *individual* method of interference on behalf of the poor, which goes by the name of *charity*, has just been showing in Lancashire the extent of its remedial worth. It has scarcely done the work of a palliative. The wound has deepened, has festered; the feeling of gratitude has given place by degrees, in hearts thus soured, to one of deep humiliation, which in its turn has changed into thorough distrust; where men thought they had sown the seeds of conciliation, there has sprung up instead the hatred of class towards class. A result so strange, serious, lamentable, deserves indeed the attention of all statesmen.

When it is necessary to lighten a ship, a portion of its cargo is thrown into the sea. In this case the cargo amounts to half a million of human beings. Ship them off and say no more about it! The fact is that if society, as such, has no notion of its duty towards them, its interest will be to get rid of them with all possible speed, so that some fine day they may not take it into their heads to adopt the dismal motto of the Lyonese working men: "To live working, or die fighting."

LETTER CXL.

THE SITUATION IN LANCASHIRE.

April 4th, 1863.

THE fears I expressed in the letter which acquainted you with the efforts and the marvels of English charity have, alas! been realised. Charity after a time has been found powerless to struggle against an evil which called for remedies of quite another

sort. In the first place the funds became gradually exhausted: the relief-committees received no more than £5,000 a week instead of £40,000, and the share that fell to every working man supported on public or private charity was reduced to thirteen shillings. After a while came about the results which continuous almsgiving will always produce, call it whatever name, disguise it under whatever shape we will.

The persons relieved soon came to feel themselves humiliated; in their hearts gratitude gradually gave place to distrust; the forced idleness to which they were doomed by the crisis prepared them to doubt, to criticise, to find fault; the having to depend on the generosity of the rich seemed to them a striking proof of their social dependence; their powers of endurance failed them against the continuance of their sufferings; their needs were redoubled while the means of satisfying them were reduced in the same proportion; and thoughts of rebellion sprang up in their otherwise lawful longing to eat the bread of labour, and that alone.

It happened naturally on the other hand that, being confronted now with demands too imperious, anon with abuse which none ventured to foresee, the relief-committees became themselves suspicious and irritable, however well disposed they had been at first. Insulting precautions were taken. Bitter reproaches followed. The recent outbreak at Stalybridge, when the bakers were forced to throw out bread, and a charge of dragoons was needed to check the rioters, is only a symptom of the disease, albeit a symptom of sinister significance.

Certain it is that half-a-million of men whom the cotton crisis has thrown out of work have become for England a cause of serious, of immense disquietude.

The millowners are for keeping things as long as possible in their present state, by means of a loan of several million pounds to be voted by Parliament. This would be like rubbing oil over a machine which, to their thinking, might still be serviceable and should not be allowed to rust.

They trust the horizon will clear up, that cotton will find its way again to England; and they ask that an evil perhaps temporary shall not be treated with a remedy which would get rid of it by getting rid of the sufferer. Such are the views lately put forth by Mr. Edmund Potter, in a letter to the *Times* which has aroused no small sensation.

But this opinion is rudely and strongly contradicted. "Emi-

gration is the one thing needful!" exclaims the *Times*. "Emigration!" is repeated in chorus,—

First, by those who, without concerning themselves about the working men's future, hate or fear the aristocracy of the cotton lords, whose competition seems to them a danger or a nuisance.

Secondly, by those who would not be sorry to deal a blow at democracy by the destruction of so huge a nest as the manufacturing population of Lancashire.

Thirdly, by those fanatics of "let-alone" who turn pale at the idea of State interference, and disallow society, as society, the right of busying itself with the sufferings of its members, even though the evil to be fought bears the name of hunger, and the numbers of famished ones can be reckoned up by millions.

Needless to say that the emigration of Lancashire working men would be the emigration of the cotton manufacture, and that in such case England would have to prepare herself for the loss of one of the most wonderful sources of her wealth. But such a consideration cannot stop the partisans of a system which consists in exporting—of course with their own consent—the people whom it seems no longer possible either to employ or to feed.

As to what will become in the colonies of these men who, trained to a particular kind of work, are mostly unfit to accept any other employment, that is a question which no one stays to think of, however great may be its moral significance.

One word more, and I have done. To seek out from the ends of the earth materials best suited for manufacturing, to work for all nations and make them all consumers of English produce, such is the business in which up to this moment the energies of England have been engaged. It is a colossal but withal a perilous business, for here the bond of dependence is necessarily reciprocal, and one nation cannot fasten all others to its girdle without being influenced by their movements. To make an English crisis out of any great crisis happening in any part of the globe, was an excess of audacity of which perhaps no other race was capable except the Saxon.

Can England look coolly at the approach of a time when she must attempt a new path? For my part, I can hardly comprehend the serenity with which I hear some Englishmen say, "The cotton manufacture is dying, the cotton manufacture is dead."

LETTER CXLI.

THE AMERICAN QUESTION AND ENGLISH WORKING MEN.

April 5th, 1863.

"I WAGER that in a week we shall be at war with America," said to me, last Sunday, an English nobleman, very clever and well informed.

The week has passed, and not an English sword has left its scabbard.

On the other hand, a gentleman quite as clever, and still better informed than the prophet in question, has just been addressing a large gathering of Scotchmen in rather different language.

You are aware, no doubt, that to kill time, and make good use of his leisure, Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston, aged more than seventy-eight, went off to deliver four speeches at Glasgow, three at Greenock, three at Edinburgh, two at Leith; speeches in which he retailed to audiences, delighted from the outset, all kinds of commonplaces on education, on Greek, Latin, chemistry, mathematics, and so forth, not to speak of ever so many puns. That certainly bespeaks a mind free from gloomy contemplations; and yet all this failed to reassure us, Lord Palmerston being of all men the very readiest to take life on its amusing side, and the best able to preserve his cheerfulness on the eve of serious complications. But he spoke, by the way, of America, and what he said was certainly of a nature to dispel gloomy thoughts.

That is fortunate; for although, as I have already told you, England is generally averse to war, still this is not the case, so far at least as concerns the aristocracy, with reference to a war against the Northern States. Only a spark, I fear, is wanted to light up that war.

Need I explain wherefore? In the state of seeming weakness to which America has been reduced by a shocking civil war, people easily persuaded themselves that to play against her was to play a sure game. And how great would be the advantage of such a course! To take vengeance for past insults, to avert fresh ones, to get rid once for all of the rivalry of a power which, if it ever rose again, would rise up threatening, angry, more formid-

able than ever; and to destroy, while there is yet time, a democracy young, vigorous, active, wealthy, bold, competing in the spirit of its men with the institutions, monarchical and aristocratic, of Old England,—there is something very tempting in all that.

It was therefore a spectacle worth seeing some eight or nine days ago, with what irresistible enthusiasm the House of Commons cheered the Prime Minister, and the Solicitor-General, and Sir Roundell Palmer, and Mr. Laird, who all declared, one after another, that in the matter of the Confederate ship *Alabama*, leisurely built by Englishmen in an English port, the government was guiltless as a new-born babe! The question, however, was quite clear.

Whether the principles of international law had been broken or not by the building of the *Alabama* in a Liverpool dockyard, was a point to which the Solicitor-General wasted time in directing the debate. One truth, however, cannot be and has not been denied, namely, that this act of building was in any case a glaring violation of the English law, commonly known as the Foreign Enlistment Act.

On the 23rd June, 1862, Mr. Adams, the American Minister, informed Earl Russell, without, however, furnishing him with any conclusive proofs, that he had strong grounds for believing that the *Alabama* was designed to figure in the struggle of the South against the North; that there were grounds for looking into it; that the vessel was on the point of being got ready for sea; that it would be ready in nine or ten days; that there was not a moment to lose. The point needed clearing up: an order to detain the vessel provisionally might be given.

At any rate, by the 22nd July, Mr. Adams had furnished Earl Russell with the needful proofs. From that moment the order for seizure should have been given. But no; without deigning to offer reasons, a whole week was allowed to go by; not till the 29th was the order forbidding the vessel's departure made known by telegraph to the proper authority. The vessel had just started.

During the debate the Solicitor-General, by a rhetorical manœuvre, unworthy of the assembly he was addressing, unworthy of himself also, tried to obscure the question by means of confusing dates. Mr. Adams having on the 26th sent further proofs, though quite unnecessary, and although by the Government's own avowal

the proofs supplied on the 22nd left no room for doubt, the Solicitor-General carefully ignored the date of the 22nd, and dwelling only on that of the 26th, asked if the paltry delay of three days warranted the Americans of the North in charging the English Government on such an occasion with neglect. And then Lord Palmerston backed up the Solicitor-General. And Sir Roundell Palmer played chorus. And the House cheered.

To complete the scandal, it was only needed to behold the violators of the law coming in for their share of those woful cheers. That, also, came to pass. The sympathies of the House, unscrupulously manifested, went forth as it were to encourage Mr. Laird, father of the English contractor, when he undertook to defend the building of the *Alabama*, on the plea that his son had received from the Federals certain offers analogous to those of the Confederates; as if the question turned on that!

The question? The question was whether the law had not been broken; whether the Government had not neglected to take precautions against that breach of law; whether a cruel hurt had not thereby been inflicted on one of the belligerents, and whether this combination of circumstances had not resulted in a serious blow to the principle of neutrality. Reckon up the acts of piracy committed by the Confederate corsair *Alabama;* reckon up the ships she has plundered and the ships she has burned; and we may learn the cost to the United States of that neutrality which Lord Palmerston, the Solicitor-General, Sir R. Palmer, and the majority of the House of Commons found so thoroughly irreproachable.

The English in their turn, to do them justice, are not without lawful grounds of complaint. If the story told of the seizure of the English vessel *Peterhoff*, on her departure from the Danish port of St. Thomas, be correct, that seizure was unwarrantable, and constitutes a wanton insult. The *Peterhoff* was sailing from one neutral port to another; she was bound for Matamoras; she had no suspicious merchandise on board; on her former detention in the neighbourhood of St. Thomas she had shown her papers, which were found to be quite regular. There seems to have been not the slightest motive for seizing her and sending her before a prize-court at Key West. The case is made more serious by the fact of the *Peterhoff's* seizure under orders of that same Wilkes who had already, in the matter of the *Trent*, embroiled the relations between the two countries.

It is to be said, and the New York journals will doubtless say, that the seizure of the *Peterhoff* is an application of the right of search, so dear to Englishmen; that mistakes may be, and often are, made in the exercise of that right; that prize-courts were established expressly with an eye to possible errors; that the seizure, if proved invalid, will be annulled, but that is a point for competent jurisdiction to determine. Be it so: it is none the less true that if the *Peterhoff* was seized without plausible motive, by order of a man who, after having once before insulted England, was promoted from the rank of captain to that of admiral, the English are surely justified in remonstrating.

The irritation therefore is very great, but only among those who are enchanted at having an excuse for becoming irritated. As I have often had occasion to remind you, the North musters in this country some impassioned partisans who are furnished by the working classes. In slavery the English working man sees the degradation of the idea of *work;* therefore he abhors the institution of slavery. Moreover, he sympathises with the North because in his eyes the North represents the cause of democracy, just as the aristocracy sympathise with the South, because among other motives, the South represents the aristocratic principle of the dominion of man over man.

This feeling of the English working man broke out with quite characteristic vehemence in a meeting of Trade Unionists, lately held in London under the presidency of Mr. Bright. Never in this great city have there been heard on behalf of the Northern cause, in company with that of the rights of labour, a protest more powerful, more fervent, drawn, if I may so express it, from lower depths of the heart. At this meeting Mr. Bright spoke with his usual force and eloquence, but the interest of the demonstration lay elsewhere. What rendered it a great, an original spectacle, a spectacle entirely unique, was the fact that the speakers who followed Mr. Bright were simple working men; Mr. Odgers, a shoemaker; Mr. Howell, a mason; Mr. Cremer, a carpenter; Mr. Conolly, an Irish mason. And really the talent displayed by all is a very fair revelation of the treasures hidden in the depths of democracy. Impossible, for instance, to express oneself more flowingly, richly, with more sense and spirit, than did the Irishman Conolly, who took off his jacket before beginning, like a working man setting to his task. This oratorical movement was loudly cheered, as you may imagine;

and the success of our impromptu Demosthenes equalled, if it did not surpass, that of Mr. Bright himself.

LETTER CXLII.

THE LORD MAYOR'S POLICE.

April 10th, 1863.

"Let a bishop be killed upon a railway, and you will see that no more accidents will happen upon railways," observed one day the wise and witty Sidney Smith. The truth, alas! is that abuses are tenacious of life so long as only the poor suffer from them; but when the great ones of the earth have to complain of an abuse, it is marvellous to behold with what facility it disappears.

If this philosophical remark should escape the sagacity of the Corporation of London, it will certainly not be Sir George Grey's fault. Listen to this.

So long as the shop-keeping monarch whose power extends over the realm which rejoices in the name of the City of London, and which terminates at Temple Bar,—in other words, so long as the Lord Mayor was content, as a Police Magistrate, to fill with despair his subjects, the dealers in lucifer matches, and to contest the public thoroughfare with the apple-women, no one dreamed of depriving him of the pleasure of having a police force, all to himself. But, oh Fatality! the Heavens decreed that the Prince of Wales should take to himself a wife, that the Princess Alexandra should make her entry into London after having traversed the City, and the Lord Mayor's police having proved but a contemptible barrier when it was required to stem the overflowing of an ocean of people, there was no occasion for any more talking—my Lord Mayor's police jurisdiction was at once condemned.

Had the mischief been limited to the fate of the poor wretches who were smothered to death in the crowd, and to the nameless women over whose bodies the immense mob passed on, pounding them as in a mortar! But there was a prince there, there was a princess there, whose safety might have been compromised through the want of sufficient precautions! No bishop

was killed, it is true; but a prince must have felt ill at ease—which is not less grave a case, if proper allowance be made for the distance which separates a bishop from a prince.

Add to this, that the offer had been made to the Corporation of London to lend them, for the purpose of maintaining peace, not only metropolitan policemen, but even soldiers, if agreeable to them, but which was declined with the majestic disdain that is one of their characteristics.

What, then, has happened? The post of Chief Commissioner of the City Police having become vacant, the citizen king of the City, surrounded by his Court, was about to see to it, when the Home Secretary, Sir George Grey—whom no one would have believed capable of such audacity—wrote to the Lord Mayor not to be in any haste about it, as a Bill was about to be laid before the House of Commons, which would save the Corporation, for the future, the trouble of appointing their police commissioners.

It is even as I tell you. Sir George Grey aims at nothing else than to despoil his *trans*-Temple-Bar Majesty of his special jurisdiction in police matters, and to annex the City to the empire of the vigilant and redoubtable Richard Mayne. Behold another blow struck at the three-fold traditional Power that sits enthroned at the Mansion House! Yet another conquest of the ogre Civilisation! Yet another stone that falls——

I am assured, and I quite believe it, that when Sir George Grey's letter was read aloud in the conclave of the Common Councilmen, the news of the projected usurpation was received by them with the calmness which the Roman Senate displayed on learning the result of the battle of Cannæ. Was it a sublime resignation? Or was it a haughty confidence in the immortality of the Corporation of London?

For my part, I incline towards the latter hypothesis. In fact, it has always been one of the characteristic traits of the Corporation of London, one of the articles of their municipal creed, to look upon their *imperium in imperio* as being of an imperishable essence, and to hold for certain that the end of the world will have arrived on the day when the Lord Mayor will no more be required to drive, in his fine coach, once every year at a fixed date, right through London, dragging after himself thousands of banners, and of ragamuffins in helmet and cuirass—on the day when a Prince of Wales shall no longer deem himself obliged to be consecrated—a fishmonger; on the day, above all,

when the sacred tradition of Mansion House dinners shall be cut short, those monstrous dinners which, from time immemorial, have illustrated the hospitable opulence of the Lord Mayors, which have established on an immovable basis the gastronomic reputation of the aldermen, and which periodically inflict turtle-soup indigestions upon all that is official and respectable in London.

If ever the spirit of tradition, in its most gothic and most grotesque form, should be banished from the earth on which we live, it will be only when of the Guildhall there shall remain not one stone upon another. By others than the City magnates it is generally supposed that the past is past, but such is not the faith of the Lord Mayor, or of the City Remembrancer, or of the Aldermen, or of the Councilmen, or of the Sword-bearer, &c., &c. In the eyes of these august personages the past and the future are all one. They ought, however, to be well aware—

> "Que les plus belles choses
> Ont le pire destin ;"

and if they do not know it, it is not from the want of having seen many a gem fall from their crown. Who would ever have imagined, for instance, that the Thames could continue to flow on when the conservancy of the Thames had ceased to form part of the attributes of the Lord Mayor? The Thames, nevertheless, still flows on just as before. It is true, it has not ceased to smell disagreeably.

Be that as it may, and in spite of the proverb, *Il n'y a que la foi qui sauve*, I much fear that the faith of the Corporation of London will not suffice to save them. It is decidedly too old an institution, and smells musty. Shrewd observers foresee the time when the Queen of England will pass through Temple Bar without asking the Lord Mayor's permission. But all are agreed to leave his Lordship one mite of consolation—the power of giving good dinners!

LETTER CXLIII.

A TRIAL FOR BREACH OF PROMISE.

April 16th, 1863.

Pourquoi ne pas m'aimer, madame l'impudente ? demands Arnolphe of the young and innocent girl of whom he has become absurdly enamoured, and you know Agnes replies;—

> "Mon Dieu ! je ne crois pas qu'on doive me blâmer.
> Que ne vous êtes-vous, comme lui, fait aimer ?
> Je ne vous en ai pas empêché, que je pense."

Well, in this country cases are often enough brought to trial which recall that scene between Arnolphe and Agnes, one of the most delightful in that comedy, the *Ecole des Femmes*, which contains so many that are really charming.

Only the other day a Mr. Corbett sent to a Miss Chandler, whom he had long desired to marry and who seemed more disposed to marry another, a formal summons to love him, or pay damages. To that Miss Chandler replied, quite in the style of Agnes, that she really could not; that she had fallen in love with Horace, quite naturally and almost without being aware of it; that—

> "Lui seul en était cause,
> Qu'elle n'y pensait pas lorsque se fit la chose."

And without more a-do, she hastened to the altar where Horace was waiting for her.

Thereupon, legal proceedings.

To tell the truth, Miss Chandler had authorised Mr. Corbett to pay his addresses to her in earnest, and that state of things had lasted for not less than two years; in other words, he was her accepted suitor. In England, engagements which are prolonged for an indefinite time are very common; and among the clergy especially there are few who marry without having passed through the ordeal of a long voluntary noviciate. The law, however, is formal—the betrothed must marry or pay.

To no purpose you would observe to the law, that it does not depend upon yourself to feel to-day what you felt two, three, four, five,

six years ago; that you have had occasion since then to entertain doubts as to the fittingness of your choice, which you had not, and could not have, previous to the fatal ordeal; that you have discovered in the object of your preference defects which you could not possibly suspect beforehand, and which exhibit the future under a much less encouraging aspect; that it is even for the interest of the person alluded to, that you should not carry out an engagement no longer dictated by mutual affection; that it is your duty, in marrying, to ensure the happiness of the person whose destiny is united to your own; that it is because you are sensible that you have not the power to do so that you draw back; that it is an honourable scruple, and that it is immoral to contract a debt when you know yourself to be insolvent—this style of reasoning is accepted by the public, a good-natured ruler, nor does common opinion ever quarrel with man or woman for breaking off an engagement. Unhappily, the law is not so easily persuaded. It says, "Don't marry unless you choose; but then you must pay—so much for every glance of the eye that has produced no effect—so much for every sigh that would never have been heard, if these consequences could have been foreseen—so much for every tender squeeze of the fingers given to no purpose!" Thus speaks the law, and it thence results that Mr. Corbett has obtained £20 by way of damages. If hereafter any one should take it into her head not to love him according to agreement, and after the ordinary fashion, she will tell the reason why, I suspect.

I hasten to admit, lest the English should accuse me of calumny, that it is, after all, rare to see a man institute what is called an "action for breach of promise;" but it is a resource to which the fair sex frequently resort, and which to some people appears quite natural.

For my part, I confess that I am not of their opinion. Putting aside, of course, all cases where there has been seduction, and where seduction has been attended with consequences compromising the honour, or the future prospects of the woman, I cannot clearly see for what reason, if the pains of disappointed love in a woman be judged to find their equivalent in sterling coin, the same thing should not hold good with regard to the man. In what respect is the disappointment of the former more deserving than that of the latter of being alleviated by a fine? During the interval of the engagement the woman, no doubt, may have missed an opportunity of getting

married, but so also may the man: and from the moment that the sufferings of a wounded spirit are valued in pounds sterling, there is no reason why a regular account should not be made out of the losses which a tradesman may have incurred since, losing his peace of mind, he ceased to give proper attention to his business.

On the other hand, is there nothing unbecoming public modesty, is there no danger for public morality, that a woman should be encouraged by the very law to look at love across a question of money, to come and recount in open court the history of her heart with a view to £ *s. d.*, and to give the exact figure of the sum which will have the power to console her? Without taking into account that it frequently happens that adventuresses take advantage of promises which were never really made to them, and to transform into a regular engagement a connection that originated with their own advances—advances to which they are incited by the hope of obtaining, at a later period, legal damages, or an equivalent in sacrifices voluntarily yielded by their dupe, alarmed by the prospect of the scandal arising from a trial.

We may say, then, that whether the action is brought by the woman or by the man, the law which affords grounds for actions for breach of promise is a bad law, and all the worse for being opposed to public opinion, for being opposed to the manners of the people, and even, as has lately been remarked, for being opposed to the principle which, especially in England, serves as a basis for marriage.

In this country, as a general rule, marriage is not, as upon the Continent, an affair arranged by the families, almost without reference to the individual feelings of the interested parties. It is not a contract concluded in virtue of considerations altogether foreign to the question of love. Here, the principle considered as the essential foundation of marriage, is the individual and perfectly unfettered choice, sprung from affection. There are, no doubt, exceptions, and I do not mean to say that in England, particularly in the aristocratic class, marriages are never brought about by vanity or interest; but the individual choice, sprung from affection and sanctioned by a free will, is certainly the rule. Now, if it be admitted that people ought not to marry without loving one another, what can be more illogical than to attach a penalty to a refusal to marry a person who is not loved?

If there has been seduction on the part of the man, seduction

followed by consequences fatal to the woman, let the seducer be punished, and the damage done be compensated as liberally as possible—that is only just. But Ariadne, abandoned by Theseus in the island of Naxos, is by no means the type of the heroines who figure in actions for breach of promise.

It may be taken for granted that a law is bad when from its observance effects proceed more pernicious than those which result from its violation. And this is precisely what would take place if the law in question were efficacious, for what can be imagined more lamentable than unions presided over by constraint —unions against which the heart secretly protests with all its might? And what sorrows does the duplicity of either prepare for the other? In speaking of marriages lightly contracted Montaigne observes, flippantly and without forethought; "It results from them what is seen in cages; the birds that are outside are in despair because they cannot enter, and with an equal desire to get out are those which are within." With much greater reason must one desire to get out of a cage into which one had no wish to enter.

LETTER CXLIV.

MEMORIAL OF THE UNEMPLOYED OPERATIVES OF STALYBRIDGE.

April 17th, 1863.

The unemployed operatives of Stalybridge have addressed a memorial to Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, from which, with your permission, I will extract a few passages for the consideration of your readers.

This memorial throws a strong light upon the ideas and tendencies of the working class in England. It has not been published, so far as I know, by any English journal,—at least, not by any of those which I read, and I read nearly all. The quotation which follows, taken from a memoir that may be regarded as unpublished, will serve by way of preface to the reply which my conscience impels me to make to an article entitled, "*Les Ouvriers et le Parti libéral en Allemagne.*"

The author of this article ascribes to an entire class of philosophers and thinkers—for whom you and I profess the highest

esteem, knowing how well they have deserved of the people,—certain ideas which they have never entertained.

He supposes their doctrines to be opposed to the free development of the individual, whereas, on the contrary, it is to promote the free development of the individual in all classes that these thinkers and philosophers recall the social power to the sentiment of its proper aim, of its mission, of its strength.

He exhibits them as striving to lower the social level, whereas, on the contrary, the tendency of all their efforts and all their writings is to raise it.

He thinks to refute them by expressing a wish that every workman may be able to sew the tails of a coat to his jacket, and is ignorant that it is precisely that, and that only, which they have always asked for.

He cannot understand the action of the union upon the members of which it is composed, except as a prize bestowed upon idleness and stupidity, whereas they, on the contrary, demand that all the great doors should be thrown open which the apathy of the Union as regards social sufferings leaves quietly closed against unguaranteed industry and talent unaided by fortune.

He insists that the progress of mankind shall not be impeded by the stifling of every individual initiative, of every individual capacity, and so far he is quite right; but these are also the views of the men whom he attacks, because he has not sufficiently studied them.

It was therefore not without some astonishment that I read in a well-reputed journal the article to which I am referring; but this astonishment would not have been mingled with any regret had the writer of it taken the trouble to prove what he is satisfied with affirming, or had he enabled the public to judge between them and himself, by extracting a few passages from the writings of those whom he denounces. For in this world, the great thing is to have truth on one's side, when every torch is alight. But still we ought not to extinguish them by abstaining from quoting what we are labouring to refute. Discussion kills nothing but error. Whoever, then, believes that truth is with him, should rather welcome attacks, instead of fearing them, provided they be made in broad day-light. If he is really sincere, he will gladly say with Ajax:—

"Dieu, rends nous la lumière, et combats contre nous."

Premising thus much, and before entering upon more precise explanations, I will quote a characteristic extract from the memorial to which I alluded at the beginning of this letter :—

" The memorialists have endured with patience and resignation the distress which has afflicted Stalybridge, as well as other towns engaged, in England, in the manufacture of cotton. They believe that the crisis must in part be attributed, but in part only, to the war in America : it proceeds above all from excessive production. With regard to the former of these causes, the memorialists acknowledge that neither their employers, nor her Majesty's government, are answerable. With regard to the latter, they admit that the manufacturers are answerable for it only to a certain extent, as some portion of the responsibility must fall upon the English merchant who exports manufactured goods, and upon the foreign merchant who imports them.

" The same memorialists desire to express, first of all, their profound gratitude for the unexampled exertions that have been made in their favour by their fellow-citizens of every class—but they take the liberty to remark that the language both of the press and public speakers had led them to regard the assistance so nobly offered by their fellow-citizens as being intended to preserve the independence of the working man, and to respect in him the sentiment of personal dignity ; in other words, to spare him the cruel humiliation of hearing himself called a pauper at the charge of the parish. But, they mention it with the deepest regret and with the keenest apprehension, the mode of administration of the Relief Committee becomes day by day more analogous to the mode of proceeding of the Poor Law Guardians, in their relations with the class whom, rightly or wrongly, they designate by the name of hereditary paupers.

" The agents of the Committee, and even some of the members of whom it is composed, in speaking, not only to the workmen, but to their wives and daughters, are in the habit of using harsh, insulting, and unbecoming language. The conduct of the Committee has been marked by innumerable acts of favouritism and injustice, without, in any of these cases, the memorialists having ever been able to reckon, in order to be heard, upon the fairness and impartiality of the administrators of the Relief Fund.

" As to the conditions to be fulfilled in order to become entitled to relief, they are hardly less humiliating than those which in the workhouses consist in picking tow or in breaking stones. The

memorialists here allude to those schools in which they and their wives are forced to consent to be shut up, under pain of not receiving anything. That the establishment of these schools originated in benevolent motives, the workmen do not deny. They are quite sensible that they have much to learn, and it would have been not only without a murmur, but with gratitude, that they would have submitted to this condition, if their presence in the schools had not become the subject of a tyrannical pressure, and if, in the event of their having either a sick child to nurse, or to attend a relation or friend to their last resting-place, leave of absence had not been made to depend upon the pure caprice of the teacher. To treat in this manner grown men, of whom many are aged, and some not less than eighty-four years of age, is exhibiting a distrust, the insulting nature of which it is impossible for them not to feel bitterly.

"And what is to be said of the offensive precaution which consists in stamping upon every article of clothing, presented as a gift, the letters S. B. R. F.,—Stalybridge Relief Fund? Does that mean that this clothing, even after it has been given to us, does not belong to us? Does it mean that the power is reserved of taking them away again, and that every individual convicted of pledging them is liable to three months' imprisonment? If that be the case, in what respect does the manner of proceeding with the free, but unemployed, workmen of Lancashire differ from that which is followed towards the unfortunate inmates of workhouses?

"The memorialists are not ignorant of the motives by which it is sought to justify such conduct. In the first place, it is said that the idleness of workmen is a dangerous condition; and, in the second place, it is asserted that it concerns society in general that they should be stimulated to seek for work.

"To the former of these objections which is urged against them, the workmen cannot bring themselves to reply, so much does their pride as Englishmen feel affronted by the supposition it implies; and, touching the latter, all they can say is that their most ardent desire is to find work, useful work, equitably remunerated.

"They have long suffered from these two evils, privation and inaction, and they feel that the latter is at least as trying as the former. Even had the funds destined to alleviate their distress been distributed among them with delicacy, and not in a manner

to make their heart bleed, they would, by this time, have been weary of such aid! Practical men affirm that many years will elapse before Lancashire recovers from this crisis, and there are persons who dread pauperism for the workmen employed in the cotton manufacture—but who can dread pauperism as their lot, more keenly than they themselves do?

"The memorialists, therefore, address themselves respectfully, but with feelings of emotion, to Her Majesty's Government, entreating them to give their attention to the means of procuring them work, either by the breaking up of uncultivated lands, or in any other manner that their wisdom may suggest. Far be from them the idea of dictating the conditions on which they will execute this labour. Only, they cannot help insisting upon the necessity of confiding the superintendence of it to Her Majesty's Government, rather than to the municipal authorities. They ask permission to observe that the disputes, to which questions relative to labour give rise from time to time—disputes, the blame of which must fall, sometimes on one, sometimes on the other of the two parties, and sometimes on both, render the local authorities less capable than Her Majesty's Government of supervising such labours, so as to spare the self-respect of the labourer, to spur on his energy, to augment his activity, for his own good as well as for that of the entire nation."

What think you, sir, of this? The working men who entertain such noble sentiments, who use such noble language—these working men who have suffered so much, and upon whom their forced inaction weighs as heavily as their want,—do they not deserve to have a voice in the matter? And when they place among the duties of the State, not to bestow upon all equality of fortune—which has never been asked for by anyone—but not to abdicate in favour of chance, in presence of millions of men driven to the alternative of either eating the sadly bitter bread of charity, or of dying of starvation—when, I say, they place that among the duties of the State, do you believe that it is with a view to insure a prize to idleness and stupidity?

If the author of the article "*Les Ouvriers et le Parti libéral en Allemagne*," had penetrated more deeply to the foundation of the doctrines which too many, alas! have only studied in the pamphlets of the mercenary writers of the *Rue de Poitiers*, he would have read what follows in the writings of a man whom he attacks, and whom he attacks by calling him fearful names, for

the benefit of women and children and silly men who are afraid of phantoms:—

"In a true democracy, the State is not the executive power, or an all-powerful minister, or an absolute monarch, or a dictator, a Louis XIV., or a Cromwell. The confusion of ideas upon this point has served to propagate all sorts of sophisms. In a true democracy, the State is Society itself acting in that capacity. Now, cannot a Society ameliorate, without despotism, its social as well as its political constitution? Will any one assert that a sick man acts tyrannically towards himself when he is taking measures to effect his cure?

"What! The nation acting through the medium of its representatives has the power to ameliorate the system of prisons, but cannot, without acting despotically, strive to ameliorate the system of labour? There would be tyranny in founding, in the name of the general will, associations of working men, and there would be none, in founding in the name of private interests, companies of capitalists? Strange, indeed, that no one shall protest, in the name of liberty, against laws being made to protect and maintain in a few hands the possession of all the instruments of work. But if any one should propose that those should not be suffered to perish by abandoning them to themselves, who, by virtue of this concentrated possession, are born poor and feeble, and whose individual capacity, whose individual initiative, are thus crushed from the very cradle—you would immediately hear people cry out that they were being stifled?

"It is altogether in vain that the notion *Individual* is opposed to the notion *State*. If by the word *State* is understood society acting collectively, on the one hand; and if, on the other hand, the free development of the individual is desired, not for the benefit of a few alone, but for the benefit of all, the two ideas which, with exceeding impropriety, are opposed to one another, so far from being antagonistic, are correlative. The latter expresses the object, the former expresses the means. Imagine for an instant the doctrine of State non-intervention being put into practice strictly, logically, rigorously! Woe to the weak! Make way for the highway robber!"

There is much more to be said upon this subject, but the length of this letter warns me to stop. I will, therefore, conclude by repeating the formula in which the social problem has been proposed by Jean Jacques Rousseau.

"To find a form of association which shall defend and protect by the common power each associate, and by which each, combining with all, shall nevertheless obey only himself, and remain as free as of aforetime."

An admirable formula if, in the place of the last five words, Rousseau had written: "and by this means become free."

LETTER CXLV.

FLUCTUATIONS OF OPINION.

April 18th, 1863.

ENGLAND has an essentially practical genius, and plumes herself upon it.

Is it an advantage? Is it a disadvantage? That depends upon circumstances.

In the first place, that which is most easy of achievement is not always that which is best to attempt. Secondly, that which appears the most easy to be done, is not always so in reality. A people's desire to see things on their broadest side may be attended with danger, but is it a lesser danger to look at them habitually on their narrowest side? One may fairly doubt it.

On the other hand, from this tendency to examine every resolution to be taken under its practical aspect, there results great instability of opinion and conduct. When one regulates one's actions by principles which are in their nature immutable, vacillation is impossible; while, on the contrary, it is impossible not to vacillate when one takes for one's guide facts that are from their very nature changeable.

Led into error by our political revolutions, the varying aspect of which makes them think that France passes her life in losing her way, the English call us a fickle people. For my part, I am tempted to consider them, as a people, more fickle than we are. But they call fickleness, what is only, on our part, a precipitancy sprung from that spirit which Mr. John Stuart Mill calls French rectitude.

What is really true is that the Gallic genius is logical to excess. It will have, at any price, the straight line. Instead of turning aside to avoid obstacles, it aspires to destroy them, and sometimes

suffers in the attempt. Impatient of compromises, it hastens with too rapid a step to the last consequences, which occasionally brings it to pass that it is suddenly thrown back. Reaction, then, as usually happens, succeeds to exertion; and superficial observers, seeing the France of the morrow so different in appearance from what France of the preceding day seemed to be, straightway cry out that there has been a metamorphosis. A pure illusion!

If closely examined, it will be discovered that after recoils provoked by too hasty a movement, France has always resumed her forward march at the very point where her previous progress had ceased to be regulated by prudence. Her history is a great drama, entitled "Conquests of Democratic Liberty." It is composed of acts which follow one another in a logical order, but which are separated by *entr'actes*. The mistake made by the English is in taking the *entr'actes* in our history for the acts themselves.

Another cause of the fluctuations of opinion in England—and one which I prefer—is the extreme multiplicity of the points of view which the unlimited liberty of the press tends to bring to light. A question which to-day is looked upon in a general sort of way in one particular relation, will be looked upon to-morrow in a different one, in consequence of the new arguments which have been brought forward, and of the impression made by them on the mass of the public.

Thus, when I write to you: "This is what England in general appears to me with reference to such or such a subject, to wish or not to wish, to desire or fear," remember that it is always of the passing hour I am speaking, being unable conscientiously to answer for the hour that is to come.

How often, for instance, since the commencement of the war in America, have I beheld what is called public opinion incline, now to the left, now to the right, according as such or such a fact happened to add to the impulsive force of the determined partisans of the South, or to the impulsive force of the equally determined partisans of the North!

The same with regard to Poland, as touching the wishes or the fears associated with the sympathies which she inspires.

In this manner, I informed you some little time ago that the English would not be sorry to see France, for the sake of the Poles, encounter single-handed the chances of a war with Russia; and I have since told you that the prospect of the advantages

which might accrue to us, whether in political preponderance, or in glory nobly acquired in defending the cause of Europe and avenging that of justice, was the subject of jealous uneasiness in this country. The two assertions seem to contradict one another, and yet they were both perfectly true, at the time of their respective dates. At a given date the former sentiment prevailed—at such another date it was the latter.

When, after founding upon the military resources and supposed genius of Langiewicz premature and exaggerated expectations, the news simultaneously arrived of his defeat, his flight, and his arrest, there was one universal sorrowing cry: *Finis Poloniæ.* Since Kosciusko had been a second time hurled to the ground in the person of Langiewicz, what more was to be hoped? All was over. Poland's heart was in him—in him, that heroic heart had ceased to beat. A man had taken the place of a people in the expectations, if not in the sympathies, of many: that man was prostrate; Poland had nothing left her but to draw her mantle over her head. Already, under the influence of this political anthropomorphism, people began to think of other things. It was an "accomplished fact."

It has cost the Poles some trouble to prove, without delay, that a nation is not a man. Without that, I am acquainted with many persons here who would have been ashamed to exhibit too much zeal in being just and generous. But, happily, the tidings that have arrived from that quarter are favourable. It is affirmed that Lithuania is up—that, from Memel to Riga, nobles, citizens, and peasants are taking up arms—that the fire has caught, or is about to catch, the Palatinates—that the breath of the insurrection has gained the south-east—that the mysterious dictatorship of the Secret Committee is everywhere undermining the ground beneath the feet of the Russians—that, from one moment to another, Warsaw may be in motion—and thus public opinion here has again entered upon the right path.

This is apparent from the demonstrations, every day becoming more numerous, every day more excited, which are breaking out in favour of Poland.

While tracing these very lines I receive very interesting details from Glasgow with reference to a manifestation of this kind, and which is especially noteworthy in that it originated in a sentiment full of persistence, and having nothing in common with the vulgar adoration of the accomplished fact.

Of all the cities of Great Britain there is not one in which the flame of democracy diffuses so much heat and brilliancy as in the commercial capital of Scotland. Edinburgh is an aristocratic and learned city, where intelligence has no sympathy for the prejudices which it is its mission to destroy, and where the lights of the mind do not always enlighten the heart. For movement, for life, for the bold worship of liberty, talk to me of Glasgow. In what other city of Great Britain could have been found men capable of serving the cause of Italian unity and of aiding Garibaldi, as have done those indefatigable champions of European democracy, Mr. John MacAdam, his brother William, and Mr. MacTear? In what other city of Great Britain could the hero of Varisi have reckoned upon such devoted auxiliaries, or the Italian insurrection on such a budget?

Well, what Glasgow was for Italy, Glasgow is for Poland. And it is for this reason that Karl Blind has been invited to let the voice of German patriotism be heard in reference to the Polish question.

It was in the City Hall at Glasgow that was held the meeting at which Karl Blind was to speak. The banquet to Lord Palmerston had just taken place, and people were still under the influence of "the Prince of Wales excitement,"—two facts of a character to use up public interest in a city which, however important and influential, is, after all, only a very large provincial town. But the subject was Poland—it was of Poland that a man was about to speak, who was known to unite the most precious gifts of mind with loftiness of soul, a man in whom, it was known, the democratic party in Germany salutes one of its noblest, one of its most magnanimous representatives abroad. The consequence was a great crowd; and before an audience of two thousand men, drawn together by a common sentiment of noble enthusiasm, Karl Blind delivered in that English tongue, with which no Englishman is more familiar than himself, a speech at the same time sensible and energetic, profound and impassioned, amid cheers which, proceeding from every part of the hall, interrupted almost every sentence. On the conclusion of this speech, in the course of which the German orator sought and found an opportunity of rendering homage to French democracy, the following resolutions were adopted:—

Rupture of all diplomatic relations with Russia; recognition of Poland as a *belligerent nation;* declaration of sympathy with

Germany in its efforts to conquer liberty and unity, in opposition to the princely policy revealed by the attitude of the King of Prussia; formation of a committee with a view to collect subscriptions; despatch of two addresses—one to the House of Commons, the other to the Hon. Arthur Kinnaird: the former to urge the House to a decision worthy of its character; the latter to challenge this decision by means of a formal motion.

There is, at least, no want of vigour here. After that, the semi-official meeting at Guildhall, which I have already described to you, grows quite pale.

The fact is, that notwithstanding all that has been said, and all that one is entitled to say, against the selfishness of the English policy, the people here have generous instincts. But there stands the aristocracy, whose influence must be taken into account. Now, in all that concerns Poland, the English aristocracy nourishes sentiments of a very complicated nature. The aristocracy, generally speaking, sympathises with Poland, were it only through fear of the excessive development of Russia, but it dreads France; it dreads the mutual affection which draws together France and Poland; it dreads the additional power and greatness which the former would acquire through the independence won by its aid for the latter; it has read somewhere that the Poles are "the French of the North," and that furnishes matter for reflection; it knows under what flag, during the wars of the first Empire, the Poles shed their noblest blood, and that memory is a source of disquiet.

LETTER CXLVI.

DEATH OF SIR GEORGE CORNEWALL LEWIS.

April 18th, 1863.

The two events of the preceding week are the death of the Secretary of War, Sir George Cornewall Lewis, and the presentation of the Budget by Mr. Gladstone.

It is with a truly astounding rapidity that death has carried off Sir G. Cornewall Lewis from his country, from his friends, from the House of Commons, from the Ministry. A cold and its consequences have sufficed to destroy, in the space of three days, that

robust intelligence; to bring to nought that treasury of knowledge; to reduce that head, a living Encyclopædia, to resemble ere long the skull which Hamlet, with so sad a simile, weighed in his hand.

Sir George Cornewall Lewis was born in 1806, and was therefore fifty-seven years of age. Statesmen in England live long—witness, Lord Palmerston, Lord Brougham, Lord Lyndhurst. It may be said that Sir George Lewis has died young.

A manifold character has been lost to England in him—the minister, the party man, the orator, the man of science.

As a minister, who flatters himself that he can replace him?—not that he was in his right place in the War Office. His conciliatory disposition, averse to aggression, rendered him unfitted to hold in check the powerful Court influences which are concentrated in the aristocratic and military domination known here by the name of the Horse Guards. Neither did he possess that power of initiative and of will which we love to place in the foremost rank of the qualities of a great minister. The influence which he exercised directly was hardly appreciable, but that which he exercised indirectly was enormous.

His qualities were the necessary complement of those with which each of his colleagues was endowed. He alone brought out the full value of their worth. He tempered the vivacity of Lord Palmerston. His prudence corrected the too impulsive readiness of Mr. Gladstone to lend his eloquent voice to the fleeting enthusiasms of public opinion; while the sort of calm impartiality which he had acquired from a profound study of history, allowed him to throw light upon the obscurity of the course into which, but for him, the more sincere than well-considered policy of Earl Russell would have heedlessly rushed. In losing him each of his colleagues loses, so to speak, a part of himself; and from this point of view his death leaves in the cabinet a void which it will be probably impossible to fill.

As a party man, Sir George Cornewall Lewis is not less to be regretted, but only in this sense, that his party, the Liberal party, gained much by being served by a mind so enlightened, and derived a large amount of moral force from the adhesion of a soul so upright and pure. For, in fact, there was nothing in Sir Cornewall Lewis that savoured of *partisanship*. In the first place, what was particularly deficient in him was political passion. A student, and fonder of books than of aught else, he had contracted

in his intercourse with science a sort of intellectual disinterestedness which prevented him from unreservedly giving himself over to his own party.

His vast acquirements of historical lore having led him to render to himself an exact estimate of the comparative amount of good and evil contained in each order of ideas, there resulted in him a marked tendency—not to content himself with scepticism, or to lull himself into the sleep of indifference—but to guard against enthusiasm, and to flee the absolute. He kept the accounts of the Liberal party by double entry, without ever omitting either a *debit* or a *credit*. His last publication is an essay on the best form of government. And what was the conclusion at which he arrived? It was this: that, strictly speaking, there is no form of government which can justly be pronounced the best. This conclusion is characteristic.

The Conservatives, therefore, were not far from looking upon Sir Cornewall Lewis as the one of all the different members of the Cabinet with whom, should circumstances permit, it would be the most easy for them to make a compromise. The idea that he seemed pointed out to succeed Lord Palmerston, whenever death should carry off the latter from the post of Premier, had nothing in it to alarm them. See Earl Russell at the helm of the State, they would not at any price, but they were perfectly resigned to see Sir G. Cornewall Lewis at that post, until their own turn should come.

The tribute of eulogium and regret which in the House of Commons Mr. Disraeli paid to the memory of his colleague, must not therefore be taken either as an ordinary expression of complimentary sentiments, or as the inspiration of a chivalrous spirit. The Conservatives in all sincerity regret Sir George Cornewall Lewis, and it is proved by the language of their newspapers.

The truth is that in him the love of progress was singularly tempered by an exaggerated apprehension of the dangers which may attend the transition from the known to the unknown. Equally incapable of compounding with the errors of the past, and of resolutely throwing himself towards the future, it was his maxim that we ought to esteem ourselves fortunate to live in a country tolerably well administered, and in which the security of persons and property is very fairly guaranteed. To expect more seemed to him too poetic—to endeavour to obtain more seemed to him hazardous. Where he separated himself from the Conser-

vatives in a decided manner, was in his honest and invincible repugnance to flatter, with a view to party success, the prejudices or the errors condemned by his reason.

To sound considerations, to just reasoning, he was manly enough to sacrifice his most deeply-rooted sympathies. Do you remember what I wrote to you on the subject of that speech in which Mr. Gladstone, speaking outside the walls of the House of Commons, and in the sense of the dominant opinion, gave rise to the belief that the ministry was about to recognise the South? Already the friends of the slave-owners were shouting victory, when Sir G. Cornewall Lewis brought back into its proper channel the public opinion that was running wild, by declaring, without pausing to consider the unpleasantness of contradicting a colleague, that a premature recognition of the South would be a violation of international law. And yet Sir Cornewall Lewis leaned more to the South than Mr. Gladstone did. Such touches portray the man. But the management of great questions requires not only uprightness, but also great force of character; and this is what Sir G. Cornewall Lewis had not. It is asserted that he died without ever having made a single enemy, and it is added that that was his highest eulogium—to my thinking nothing could be put more forcibly either for or against him.

As an orator, he did not command admiration by brilliancy of thought, and still less by eloquence of language, or gracefulness of action. But he was so fully possessed with his subject—he discussed it with so much authority—he supported his reasonings with so much real knowledge—that his influence in the House of Commons became in a brief space of time almost supreme.

Political men are too frequently deficient in culture, and possess a very superficial knowledge, beyond what is needed for the exigencies of each day. In Sir G. Cornewall Lewis, on the contrary, politics and science were closely united. His inquiry into the degree of credibility to be attached to facts relative to the history of ancient Rome evinces an erudition as profound as it was comprehensive. A rare power that of being always ready to answer to the requirements of an active life, when one's heart is fixed on study, retirement, and books.

Imagine how completely filled must have been the life of a man who, having been successively appointed Poor Law Commissioner in 1839, Secretary to the Board of Control in 1847, Secretary to the Treasury in 1850, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1855,

Home Secretary in 1859, and lastly, Secretary of State for War, nevertheless found means of conducting for some time the *Edinburgh Review*, of translating from the German "The Political Economy of the Athenians," of publishing upon the "Government of the Colonies," a work full of research, of passing through the sieve of a learned analysis the first ages of Roman history, of writing a dissertation upon the Church of Ireland, and of bringing out many philosophical treatises. To live thus is to live long, even though one dies at the age of fifty-seven.

Sir Cornewall Lewis's death, I repeat, leaves in Lord Palmerston's Cabinet a void that will not easily be filled. Mr. Gladstone's importance, however, will gain by it, and he will become more necessary than ever.

Mr. Gladstone, besides, possesses what his defunct colleague was far from possessing—a talent, the splendour of which, if I may so express myself, strikes upon the mind through the eyes. The speech which he has lately delivered, in bringing forward the budget of the financial year, is the *ne plus ultra* of eloquence applied to questions of figures.

Remark that, of all the orators of the House of Commons, Mr. Gladstone is perhaps the only one whose speeches are published exactly as they are pronounced, that is to say, without that getting-up in which parliamentary harangues are here presented to the public after passing through the obliging hands of the newspaper reporter.

And Mr. Gladstone speaks extempore.

On this occasion he used infinite art to prepare for the final effort. He commenced with sombre hues, comparing with the deplorable situation of Lancashire the deplorable situation of Ireland, and showing how the total value of the products of Irish agriculture had diminished nearly one-third between 1859 and 1863. Then, like the sun piercing the clouds, his words brought back joy into every heart by the declaration of this remarkable fact, that the revenue of England, which, from 1843 to 1852, had increased only six per cent., had increased at least twenty per cent. from 1853 to 1861.

But where he struck his great blow was when he announced that, the receipts of the financial year being estimated at £71,490,000, and the expenditure at £67,749,000, he had a surplus of £3,741,000 to dispose of.

There remained to explain what was to be done with this sur-

plus, and in this matter also Mr. Gladstone hit the mark. He will keep £581,000—no more—to guard against eventualities, and the rest will be applied to the benefit of the public by means of two reductions of taxation, both highly popular.

The duty upon tea will be lowered from 1*s.* 5*d.* per lb. to 1*s.*, and the income-tax from 9*d.* in the pound to 7*d.* Nor is this all. Mr. Gladstone has had the happy idea of entirely exempting from income-tax—to the extent of £60—all persons whose incomes are less than £200 per annum—a considerable relief this to the position of a numerous class of individuals upon whom the income tax had pressed until now with a crushing weight, and in a very unfair manner.

Prince Alfred was present at the sitting, lost in the crowd of spectators. The members of Parliament, as is their custom, had their hats on, while this young man, as is also the custom, was bareheaded.

LETTER CXLVII.

MR. GLADSTONE'S BUDGET.

April 19th, 1863.

On the 16th April the veil which covered the Budget was rent asunder in presence of a compact crowd of the representatives of the English people. Never has a more complete parliamentary triumph been decreed to Mr. Gladstone. Hardly had he ceased to speak when the whole House rose, by a spontaneous movement of applause, I had almost said of admiration. To extemporise upon dry questions of figures a discourse that lasts for three hours, and which, for all that time, holds the audience as if hanging on the lips of the orator, is a feat of which Mr. Gladstone alone is capable.

If we are to believe La Fontaine—

> "On ne peut contenter tout le monde et son père."

And yet Mr. Gladstone has succeeded, this time, in satisfying everybody. Even Mr. White, the most difficult of men to please as regards reforms, was compelled to declare Mr. Gladstone's last Budget admirable.

Mr. Gladstone reckons upon £71,490,000 of income, and estimates the total of foreseen expenditure at only £67,749,000. A surplus of £3,741,000, therefore, remains at his disposal, the greater portion of which he proposes to employ in the following manner.

You are aware that among the taxes which press upon the English people figure the Income-tax. This tax amounted to ninepence in the pound sterling, but all who had a less annual income than £100 were exempted from paying it. Such an exemption was only just, but it was confined within too narrow limits. In England there is a considerable number of men belonging to different professions—literary men, journalists, artists, clerks—who are barely able to live even upon an annual income of £200. Upon these the Income-tax was a load disproportionately heavy, and it is their burden which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has desired to mitigate, by asking that henceforth the possessor of an annual income varying between £100 and £200 should be authorised to deduct £60 from the amount upon which the tax is levied, so that a man who every year earns £200, for instance, will have to pay only upon £140.

This reduction is founded upon the principle that actual necessaries are not proper objects for taxation, and £60 are looked upon as pretty nearly representing what is necessary to the class in question. In addition to this, Mr. Gladstone proposes generally to lower the income-tax from ninepence to sevenpence, which will certainly be received in all quarters with shouts of joy.

Another reduction which will doubtless earn for the Chancellor of the Exchequer the blessings of a multitude of households, is that of the duty upon tea—a duty which, thanks to him, will drop from one shilling and fivepence to one shilling per pound. The English being the greatest tea drinkers in the world, that is by no means an unimportant measure, and it was one ardently desired.

Still a doubt rested on men's minds, would the reduction fall upon sugar or upon tea? Mr. Gladstone was of opinion that, in the interests of the Treasury receipts, the principal, which is tea, ought to take precedence of the accessory, which is sugar. He calculated that the cheapness of tea would lead to a larger consumption of sugar, whereas, in all probability the cheapness of sugar would not lead to a larger consumption of tea. The poor woman who will take an extra cup of tea will readily pardon

herself the luxury of an extra lump of sugar, but she will not drink an extra cup of tea because sugar has become a little less dear.

It is quite certain that such a reduction of taxation will cause, or, rather, has already caused, very lively and universal satisfaction: the more so that it occurs at a time of gloom—when Lancashire is in agony—when there is a talk of exporting, by way of emigration, half a million of working men, to whom there is no more bread to give—when the trade with America is dried up in its principal sources—when the situation of Ireland is disastrous, as disastrous, indeed, as that of Lancashire. Mr. Gladstone supplied upon this situation of Ireland harrowing details—figures that wring the heart. In 1859 the value of the crops of oats, wheat, potatoes, and of the third of the cattle—which is supposed to represent the annual renewal—was estimated, in Ireland, at the sum of £39,437,000, while at the present day it is estimated at no more than £24,327,000. In other words, £12,000,000 constitute the sum which expresses the rapidity of the sinister movement that from 1859 to 1861 has propelled Ireland to ruin and famine.

LETTER CXLVIII.

M. DE BISMARCK JUDGED IN ENGLAND.

April 27th, 1863.

Louis XIV., it is quite true, was a man to enter the parliament in hunting boots and with a whip in his hand. But, first of all, Louis XIV. was Louis XIV.; and, secondly, his insolence had, at least, the merit of not being systematic. The proof is, that one fine day, trembling at the effects of his own passion, he threw his cane out of the window lest he should strike a gentleman with it.

Herr von Bismarck, who is not the "great king," would not, for his part, have so many scruples.

If the Prussian Minister is ambitious of being spoken of in Europe, no matter in what manner, he has grounds for contentment. Here, at least, his last outbreaks are discussed with such a superfluity of contempt and indignation that his vanity has reason to triumph.

St. Philip of Neri having heard that a certain nun claimed for herself the power of working miracles, resolved to ascertain if she possessed the virtues requisite for such a faculty, especially that of humility. He therefore went to visit her in a very dirty pair of shoes, which, as soon as he saw her, he hastened to fling at her head, desiring her at the same time to clean them. Great outburst of fury on the part of the saint, whereupon St. Philip of Neri, without loss of time, informed the Pope that he must not reckon upon a saint of this fashion. Such is the story which the *Spectator* repeats in reference to that memorable sitting of the 17th April, at which M. de Bismarck was seen to throw his dirty shoes at the head of the Prussian Chamber, which unhappily showed itself more worthy of the honours of canonization than the nun I have been writing about.

That a Minister, represented to be constitutional, should have dared to say to an assembly of the representatives of the people, "We will make war, with or without your approbation;" that invited, in accordance with the constitution, to be present at a debate which concerned himself, he should have had the impudence to declare that he had heard all from an adjoining apartment, which was quite sufficient; and that, lastly, when called upon to retract or apologise for the insult, he should have taken pleasure in turning his weapon in the wound by exclaiming, "If in this Chamber there are deputies who have good lungs and can make themselves heard at a distance, I do not see why I should not avail myself of that advantage," is one of those things which, in the country whence I am writing to you, appear monstrous to the point of almost appearing impossible. In England a Minister who should attempt such conduct would not only be expelled on the instant from the House and dismissed from power, but would be turned out of society as having lost the title of "gentleman."

What! was it not enough to tell the Prussian Chamber that both itself and its Budget could be dispensed with? Was it not enough to refuse it all categorical explanation relative to the convention concluded between Russia and Prussia, or, in other words, all control over the foreign policy of the Government? Was it also necessary to treat it as if it were unworthy of the consideration which is thought to be mutually due between persons in good society? In the eyes of the English such proceedings have in them something so extraordinary, so monstrous,

that everybody is lost in conjectures as to what motive the Prussian Minister could possibly have for acting in such a manner.

Does he hope, in the madness of his vanity, to prove to the world that he has in him the stuff of a second Strafford? But Strafford's arrogance was the disease of a lofty soul; it never descended to vulgar insults. Besides, we all know whither it conducted him!

Does M. de Bismarck propose to play the part of Richelieu? But Richelieu, whose hand was strong enough to wield the axe,—even Richelieu would not have thought his hand strong enough to brandish a horsewhip in his struggle with the nobility.

Here is an amusing hypothesis. Some have asked, with a smile upon their lips, if peradventure M. de Bismarck may not be a great patriot, a sublime patriot, who, desiring the liberty of his country, and despairing of rousing the Prussians to shake off their lethargy unless forced to it by the excess of his provocation and insult, has taken upon himself, in the hope of making them move, to give them the spur in the flank—heroic devotedness, superior to all that ancient history tells to us of Decius and of Curtius!

Let us speak seriously. What is most clear in the conduct of the Prussian Minister is, that the degradation of the national representation is, on his part, a systematic business. Reckoning upon the German phlegm, he thinks, no doubt—

That the Prussian Chamber will swallow to the last drop the outrages which are poured down its throat;

That the representative system will thereby fall into contempt;

That the people, reading the reports of debates in which the deputies allow themselves to be treated, one while as refractory school-boys, another while as subalterns, will turn away from them with indifference, perhaps with disgust;

That the spectacle of a king capable of vanquishing parliamentary opposition without needing even to have recourse to a *coup d'état*, will bring back to the worship of brutal force the timid and the wavering;

That place-hunters, so numerous in Prussia, will hasten to pay their homage at the feet of the most daring power;

In a word, that representative institutions will perish by the degradation inflicted on those in whom they are personified.

There remains to examine the question to what point the

success of this pitiable policy will be facilitated by the resignation of the men who endure its insults. The *Economist* compares them to children who have barely attained the age at which the fact of being whipped becomes intolerable, because to physical pain is added the sentiment of an humiliation more grievous even than the physical pain. This will suffice to let you see with what severity people here judge the patience displayed by the Prussian deputies. Some days ago the *Times* observed, in a tone half-irony, half-vexation, that in Prussia one half of the men of intelligence, after having passed in turns through the hands of the official schoolmaster, the professor, and the drill-sergeant, completed their disciplinary education in some government office, and added: "How does it happen that, having at their disposal horses so docile and before them a road so level, those who hold the reins should be so ill advised as to be always mistaking the road, pushing at least two of the wheels into the stream, and burying themselves in the mud?" Yes, to such harsh comparisons, to such bitter reflections, does the far too submissive attitude of the representatives of constitutionalism in Prussia give rise in this country. The Vice-President's refusal to call M. de Bismarck to order at the sitting of the 17th is a thing which is quite incomprehensible to the English.

As for the conduct of that minister with reference to the general interests of Europe, it is everywhere denounced in England as a public danger. If M. de Bismarck had committed no other fault than that of using a Russian dialect when addressing a Prussian Chamber, as Dr. Lœve remarks, it might be passed over; but the presumptuous minister, in the proportion that he tends more and more to alienate Constitutional Governments, finds it more and more necessary to realize the phrase which naturally jars upon the ear of England: "The Russian frontier begins at the gates of Berlin." This foreseen subjection of Prussia to Russia is justly regarded by the English as the greatest peril that could threaten their own tranquillity and that of Europe. That Napoleon, in consequence of what is passing in Poland, may come into collision with the Emperor Alexander, is by no means the chief subject of their anxiety. But that the King of Prussia, by linking his destinies to those of Russia, should summon the French armies to the banks of the Rhine, is what England cannot look upon without disquietude, and it helps to render M. de Bismarck's follies hateful.

Nor is this all. Public opinion in England is very favourable to the establishment of Constitutional Governments, while it is terrified by the phantom of revolutions; nor is the violent downfall of thrones very much to its taste. England, therefore, reproaches M. de Bismarck with sowing in Germany the seeds of a Revolution, in leaving the Prussians no other alternative than to submit unconditionally and disgracefully, or to proceed straight to the destruction of their monarchy! This is what the *Economist* declares, without any beating about the bush, in an article beginning with these words: "Herr Von Bismarck is beginning to become a public nuisance," and ending with these; "Herr von Bismarck supplies the spirit of revolt with the goad which it needs, and advances with imperturbability on a path to which there is only one possible issue. For this reason we denounce him as a public enemy to the peace of Europe."

LETTER CXLIX.

EARL DE GREY.—MR. STANSFELD.

April 28th, 1863.

The post left vacant by the death of Sir Cornewall Lewis has just been filled. Lord Palmerston's choice has fallen upon Earl de Grey.

The choice is remarkable.

In the first place, Earl de Grey is quite a young man—I doubt if he is yet thirty-six years of age. But Lord Palmerston has reasonably judged that the point to be considered was, whether or not the man was fitted for the place—whether, in the War department, Earl de Grey would be, as they say here, the right man in the right place.

He was already Under-Secretary for War, and in that capacity he had an opportunity of studying from a close point of view all that relates to the functions with which he is now charged. Besides, he it was whom Lord Herbert, on his death-bed, had recommended as the fittest man to be his successor. Earl de Grey gave a hearty impulse to the Volunteer Movement, and has succeeded in gaining the good-will of that force, without diminishing his credit with the army, which is no slight recommendation.

The Ministry will not, perhaps, gain in him what it has lost in Sir Cornewall Lewis, and yet the Prime Minister's choice is generally approved of, except in reference to one point.

Lord de Grey sits in the House of Lords. So also does the Secretary for Foreign Affairs. So also does the First Lord of the Admiralty. Here then are three of the most important ministerial posts, which exercise the most active influence upon State affairs, which have the largest patronage and the largest amount of money at their disposal, placed completely beyond the direct control of the House of Commons, in which for the moment they are represented only by Under-Secretaries of State.

This arrangement possesses a defect which occurs especially to those whom long experience has familiarised with the practice of parliamentary life. When the House has to pronounce censure, it is of no trifling importance that this censure should fall upon the head of the individual who has incurred it. When the House has explanations to demand, it is right that they should be given by the individual who is really responsible for them. Placed face to face with the House, a Minister will often be induced to form engagements and to bind himself by promises, which would be beyond the powers of a subordinate, and which no one would ever endeavour to obtain from the latter. The appointment of Lord de Grey, therefore, who is not a Commoner, is regarded by many as a lessening of parliamentary control.

But, to be just, it is not Lord Palmerston who is to blame. The Liberal party, in the House of Commons, comprises few men thoroughly versed in the knowledge of public business. If administrators are needed, recourse must be had to the Conservative party; but as the actual Prime Minister deemed it necessary, for the maintenance of his power, to give satisfaction to the Liberal party, he was obliged to look in the House of Lords for what he had so much difficulty to find in the House of Commons.

A strange personage this Lord Palmerston! I have often remarked, and I adhere to what I have said, that he is a Tory at heart. Every reform is a subject of apprehension to him, or, at all events, is repugnant to his tastes, and he has called to his side, in Lord de Grey, a daring spirit who is astonished by nothing in the shape of an idea. At a period when the word "socialism" was a scarecrow which it was agreed upon to set up in the field of abuses, to prevent reformers from alighting upon it, the most high and most opulent Lord de Grey—at that time Lord

Goderich—resolutely took his place among the party of Christian Socialists in England, stretched out a friendly hand to men proscribed for having doubted the perfect conformity of the morality of the age with the morality of the Gospel, and applied his mind to discovering means for ameliorating the condition of the labourer by exalting the dignity of labour.

But to Lord Palmerston all that is of little moment. Progress has no attraction for him, but he is not at all displeased at having under his orders those for whom progress does possess attractions—were it only as a means of neutralising them. Besides, the selfish serenity with which he contemplates human affairs prevents him from feeling any sort of antipathy for any person or thing whatsoever.

When the Conspiracy Bill was laid before the House of Commons some years ago, it was in consequence of an amendment moved by Mr. Milner Gibson that Lord Palmerston's ministry was dissolved. Did the conquered bear any ill-will towards his conqueror? Not in the least. No sooner was Lord Palmerston recalled to the helm in 1859, than Mr. Milner Gibson was appointed President of the Board of Trade. The two adversaries thus became colleagues. At the present moment they again sit, side by side, at the Cabinet Councils, are on comfortable terms with one another, and, what is still more curious, Mr. Gibson has never for all that broken with the Manchester School. He still continues an integral portion of the triple-headed god, composed of himself, Mr. Cobden, and Mr. Bright—of Mr. Cobden, who has refused to be a minister, and of Mr. Bright, who can never become one.

To lean upon the stick that has struck him, or which might strike him, is one of the characteristic traits of Lord Palmerston's policy. It is one of his grand means of attaining to his great end, the preservation of power. He takes what suits him, wherever he finds it.

Of this there is extant a yet more striking proof than the nomination of Earl de Grey as Secretary for War—it is that of Mr. Stansfeld as Junior Lord of the Admiralty. The Marquis of Hartington, who filled this latter post, having been summoned to take the one vacated by Earl be Grey, his successor was to be chosen, and the choice has fallen upon Mr. Stansfeld.

Now, Mr. Stansfeld is almost more than a Liberal, he is a Radical, and almost more than a Radical, if he is to be judged

by the circle of relations in which he has always lived, and by the friends who are dearest to his heart. Touching home questions, he is very decidedly against the abuse-working privileges of the Established Church, and very decidedly in favour of the extension of the franchise. Touching foreign affairs, no one sympathises more ardently than he does with oppressed nationalities. He is to be classed with those who hold Foreign Offices and their pretended sagacity in little esteem—with those who believe that peoples have little to hope and much to fear from diplomacy. In short, far from being a Conservative after the manner of Lord Palmerston, he is not even a Whig after the manner of Earl Russell.

On the other hand, he is, in the broadest acceptation of the word, a worthy man, of untarnished honour. When the electors of Halifax cast their eyes upon him, he was questioned as to the nature of his friendships. If his opponents thought by that to intimidate him, the result quickly proved that they were mistaken. Far from excusing himself for having as intimate friends well-known republicans, and democrats whom calumny has not spared, Mr. Stansfeld declared himself honoured by the affection with which he had inspired them, and showed himself ready to sacrifice to the wish to preserve it, by deserving it, the hope of entering the House of Commons. There was certainly nothing very heroic in this—to have acted otherwise would have been the part of the lowest of men—but on this occasion Mr. Stansfeld did his duty with a nobleness of attitude, with a loftiness of language, which told clearly how his soul was tempered. He was elected.

In Parliament the costly policy of Lord Palmerston has found in him a grave and eloquent censor. Mr. Stansfeld has not often spoken, but every time that he has done so it has been with a winning gracefulness, an exquisite correctness of language, a great elevation of sentiments. From his very first speech he took his place among the rising men, and in fixing the eyes of the public upon himself he has fixed Lord Palmerston's also.

That the latter was right, from his own point of view, in inviting Mr. Stansfeld to serve under the banner of his Government, is beyond a doubt; but that Mr. Stansfeld was right in accepting the offer is what, I fear, will cause those who love him some difficulty in coming to a common agreement.

It is true that Mr. Stansfeld has not the qualities of a tribune

of the people. The flame which burns within him never reveals itself by brilliant flashes. The extreme gentleness of his manners, his modest demeanour, his simple language, and his pensive aspect, lend a singular charm to all intercourse with him in the relations of private life, but run some risk of not being appreciated at their proper worth in the conflicts of the public arena. His calm and measured eloquence is persuasive—but will it have the power of carrying away captive? It remains to be seen if there is a sufficient motive to justify such a man in encountering the peril of being absorbed.

Without being exactly a tribune, it may, of course, be in a man's power to render important services to the people's cause; and that cause no one, certainly, was more capable of usefully aiding than Mr. Stansfeld as a member of the House of Commons. Will he find as productive an employment for his energy in a ministry in which, after all, he will occupy only a subordinate position—in which nothing will be left entirely to his own initiative—in which his eloquence will depend upon the necessities of his superiors—in which his share of action will be less considerable than his share of responsibility?

It is possible that he may have wished to break himself in to the practice of public business, in expectation of events that may bring to the surface a power more in harmony with his aspirations than the actual power. It is, of course, needless to observe that, whether regrettable or not, Mr. Stansfeld's resolution can only have been drawn from a lofty source. But the danger is, that in this attempt he may lose some of the power he himself possessed.

The popularity which he did not court—what noble soul ever does court it?—was beginning to come towards him, and the influence it offers is not to be disdained by him who would employ it in the service of truth and justice. But popularity is a jealous goddess, sometimes unjust, always exacting, and who, when she gives herself up, expects a return.

LETTER CL.

LORD CARDIGAN AND THE BALAKLAVA CHARGE.

April 30th, 1863.

A VERY amusing book might be written, I fancy, in defence of Pyrrhonism on matters historical. Was it not Horace Walpole who was so fond of reading historical works, because (said he) "if it relates to history, I know beforehand it is not true"? If you would throw a doubt on the best attested facts of history, tell me of the hard-working, conscientious historian, who has spent a lifetime in composing a work dedicated to the truth. Alas! he knows but too well what a mountain of mistakes can be piled up about any given historical theme for the instruction of present and future ages!

But listen! Among the questions which in these days have most strongly enlisted the public attention, or rather the public curiosity, in England, may be ranked the following:—

In the famous Balaklava charge in the Crimean war, led on by Lord Cardigan, Colonel of the 11th Hussars, what did Lord Cardigan himself do? Did he, as he himself affirms, fling himself on the Russian guns, in the face of a fearful storm of bullets, slashing right and left, and carried away by his warlike ardour even beyond the guns of the enemy, till, finding himself alone amidst a cloud of Cossacks, he made them bite the dust, and rejoined his own men with the air of one returned from the realm of shades? Or is it rather true, as we are assured by the Hon. Somerset Talbot Calthorpe, Lieutenant-Colonel of the 5th Dragoons, that, when his soldiers were falling around the Russian guns, the Earl of Cardigan *was not there*, having let his horse run away with him to the spot whence he had started?

Here, you see, is no question of any historical problem in connexion with a Ninevite or Babylonian war; nothing here bearing on the subject of Troy, whose ten years' siege has been sung by Homer, although it now seems nearly proven that the city of Troy never existed. No, indeed. The point for discussion relates to the most celebrated of recent military achievements; to the Crimean war, if you please, and in that war to the charge of Balaklava—that heroic feat which a Russian general

called "a charge of fools," while a French general condemned it in these terms:—"It is fine, but it is not according to the rules of war."*

The charge brought against Lord Cardigan by Major (now Lieut.-Colonel) Calthorpe dates from the period when the latter published a work called "Letters from Headquarters, or the Realities of the Crimean War." In it occurs the following passage:—

"They (the 700 men, dragoons, lancers, and hussars, composing the brigade of light cavalry to whom the order to charge was given) set out at a trot, poor Nolan galloping ahead of the brigade and encouraging the soldiers by voice and gesture. Presently the Russian artillery began to play. Nolan was the first to fall. He had been struck in the chest; his horse turned round sharp and bore him to the rear across the advancing squadrons. His piercing screams rose above the din of battle, and, slipping off his seat, he fell dead near the spot where the signal to charge had been given. As the British cavalry went forwards they quickened their pace. All along the valley the ground shook with thundering echoes under the horses' feet. The enemy's fire growing doubly spirited, the carnage became terrible. The English rode on to their death with heads lowered, thinking only of the object of their attack. At last they reached the guns. Their ranks had been horribly decimated; but the survivors in their turn made a fearful slaughter of the Russian gunners, who were all slain, excepting those who found shelter beneath the carriages. At that moment nothing was more needful than the presence of a general, and unluckily Lord Cardigan was not there. As he was nearing the battery—so he himself has since told the story—a gun went off close to him, so close that for a moment the earl fancied his leg had been shot off. But the fact is, he was not wounded. All at once his horse took fright and galloped off to the rear, passing between the 4th Dragoons and the 8th Hussars, before those regiments had gained the battery."

This last phrase seemed to leave a doubt hanging over Lord Cardigan's courage. He complained to the author, who, by way of satisfaction, inserted in the second edition of his book a kind of preface containing these words:—

"The author has received from Lord Cardigan a protest to the

* "C'est beau, mais ce n'est point là de la guerre."

effect that every fact regarding him in this book was calumnious, contrary to truth, and absolutely devoid of foundation. The author could only fall back on the evidence of officers who were on the spot. Lord Cardigan being an excellent horseman, it was no doubt a mistake to suppose that his horse had carried him far away from the battery; but what cannot be denied is that he retreated, passing between the 4th Light Dragoons and the 8th Hussars," &c.

That was thrusting the sword back into the wound, aggravating the offence, throwing the responsibility of a retreat represented as a flight, no longer on the horse, but on the rider. A third edition appeared in 1858, in which the offensive imputation was reproduced.

In France or in Belgium a sword-stroke would have settled the dispute, and no human power could have prevented a soldier from defending as a soldier his wounded honour. But in this country duelling is forbidden by a law stronger than all laws, and condemned by a judge more revered than all judges—public opinion. In 1856 Lord Cardigan had tried to bring the matter before a court-martial, whose incompetence had been pleaded against him. Checked on that side, he had made various attempts to draw from Major Calthorpe a voluntary retractation, but in vain. The publication of Mr. Kinglake's book, in which the Major's story is perhaps destined to find a place, has just given an access of disagreeable importance to a question which Lord Cardigan's honour forbids him to leave in obscurity. His Lordship, therefore, resolved to appeal to the Court of Queen's Bench, and the affair will shortly be brought to trial.

Needless to say that all this has made a mighty noise in the army, the drawing-rooms, the clubs. I have heard people speak, some for, others against, the Earl. Let us await issue.

But why? Is it likely that the problem will be solved, judges being no more endowed with omniscience than other mortals? The witnesses whom Lord Cardigan summons in his behalf are General Scarlett, Lieutenant-General Jenyns, Captains Morgan and Smith, Lieutenant Johnson, Sergeants Penn and Wightman, &c. That is certainly a good deal; but, on the other hand, we cannot suppose that Major (now Lieutenant-Colonel) Calthorpe has ventured to affirm things so serious without proof, or, at least, some show of proof; and what makes this notion still less admissible is the formal, reiterated, positive, unyielding refusal

of the military historian to withdraw his statements. Oh, that formidable "Que sais-je!"

Would that this were the first time we had to groan over the fallibility of that poor muse Clio! But how many worthy folk has she not caused, or allowed, to believe in stories which will go on winning credence to the end of time; for instance, that the library of Alexandria was burnt by Omar; that Kosciusko, conquered at Macijowicz, cried out, *Finis Poloniæ;* that Cambronne at Waterloo refused to surrender with pompous flourishes, in the style of a melo-drama; that Madamoiselle de Sombreuil, in those days of September, was forced to drink a glassful of blood; that Robespierre, besieged in the Commune, turned his pistol against himself; that it was Louis Blanc who, in 1848, organised the national workshops which—and that is the best part of the joke—were started and organised in spite of him and in opposition to him? I should never have done were I to quote all the huge historic—I ought to say unhistoric—errors which pervade the world, and which form a treasury of consolation for the benefit of Lord Cardigan.

LETTER CLI.

PARTIALITY OF THE GOVERNING CLASSES FOR THE CONFEDERATES.

May 9th, 1863.

The day before yesterday a deputation of Trade-Unionists, in company with Mr. Bright, presented the American Minister, Mr. Adams, with the address voted on the 26th of April at a meeting held in St. James's Hall.

It will be to the everlasting honour of the working classes, on whom the effects of the American war are pressing with a load so crushing, that they have never for one minute changed in their feeling of horror for the institution of slavery, and in their antagonism to those who have taken up arms not only for its maintenance, but even to extend its conquests and perpetuate its savage apostleship.

"We abhor the principle of slavery. We disapprove of the rebellion of the Southern states. We sympathise with the North in its efforts to subdue the rebellion. We admire—especially

with regard to the abolition of slavery—the general policy of President Lincoln, and wish him to know it. That is what we are come to tell you."

Thus spoke the workmen-deputies by the mouth of Mr. Bright; whereupon Mr. Adams expressed the hope that, *notwithstanding all that had happened*, the English and American Governments would be sufficiently moved by the feeling of their responsibility to maintain friendly relations between the two countries.

What other answer could Mr. Adams give?

The working-classes here count for nothing in the eyes of diplomacy. They are not represented in the play of the public powers. Barely are they represented in the press. It is not their opinion, therefore, especially on points of foreign policy, which constitutes OPINION. "Opinion" on international questions is that which is held by what are here called "the governing classes." This it is which provides nations friendly, hostile, or rival to England with the measure of her tendencies and her passions; it is of that foreigners speak when they say "England." And, in fact, that opinion has at its disposal a mighty organisation, thousands of instruments, thousands of mouth-pieces, and loud-sounding echoes in every quarter of the globe.

Now for what party, if not for the South, has the opinion of the governing classes declared itself from the outset?

I allow that the language of the American press in the North has been often very inconsiderate, violent, unfair, full of bravado: but, in good truth, has not its vehemence been provoked by the daily recurring evidences of a partiality unreserved and, to speak plainly, shameless?

With what face could people talk of English neutrality? Was it to show her neutrality that England—that of the "governing classes"—gave the slaveowners the full influence of her moral support? How many sophistries and of what kind have there not been employed on this side the Atlantic to get the owners and vendors of human flesh, who are fighting for the maintenance of their *right* to traffic in it, greeted as heroes in the cause of freedom, as martyrs to the cause of independence? With what emotions of delight has not the news of their success been always received, grossly exaggerated as it was sure to be, while people almost went into mourning for the successes of their adversaries, when there was no means of contriving fair grounds for consolation by undervaluing those successes! Is there any kind of eulogy that

has not been decreed to Mr. Jefferson Davis? Has Mr. Lincoln been spared a single expression of contempt? Great statesmen, great captains, great administrators, all these the land of slaves had to show forth to a wonder-stricken world! And the democracy of the North, that boasted democracy, what was it found to have produced, once it had been abandoned to itself? Short-sighted politicians, idiotic administrators, financiers the artificers of bankruptcy, and generals who seemed to have made a league with defeat. Such is the theme on which the English press, saving a very few journals, such as the *Daily News*, the *Morning Star*, and the *Spectator*, kept on continually weaving all manner of insulting variations.

It is right to remember that the North, besides committing some considerable faults, has been far from displaying the qualities likely to be most appreciated in this country: I mean the external dignity of attitude, the external dignity of language, a countenance stern and haughty, a quiet air, absence of ostentation and brag. In England—and this remark is not mine, but the *Spectator's*, a journal remarkable for the philosophic impartiality of its judgments, the loftiness of its sentiments, and its depth of insight—in England people are more inclined to advocate a bad cause defended in proper form than a good cause badly defended. That comes of the importance here attached to *externals*, an importance caused by something factitious, something conventional, in the existence of every aristocracy. It too readily measures a man by that which is outside him; it is apt to take the mask for the face itself. A democracy turbulent, braggart, restless, swift to pass from dejection to pride, exaggerating one while its strength, another while its reverses, using the abolition of slavery now as a question of nationality, anon as a military device, doubtful, in short, as to the nature of its aim and the choice of its means—that is all that aristocratic England has seen or wished to see in the North. And when, on the contrary, she observed that the government of Jefferson Davis spoke little and hit hard, came forth calm in adversity and modest in success, kept its eye always fixed on its purpose, and strode towards it with a resolute step, she fancied herself perfectly justified in sympathising with the South; she never asked if the cause of the South was just, if justice would triumph through the victory of the South. She judged the tree by its bark, not by its fruit.

Of the temper of the House of Commons there is no possible

doubt. It comes out but too plainly in the reception there given to any attack upon the North. It has shown itself quite recently.

I will not stop to mention the speech in which, some days ago, Mr. Roebuck poured out his bilious eloquence. Mr. Roebuck was born for strife; the threats of the American press have ruffled his sour nature, and set in motion his quarrelsome impulses; he is prepared to give blow for blow; his philippic has no kind of significance. Moreover, since he offered himself to England as voucher for the liberalism of the Court of Vienna and became a missionary of Austria, he has ceased to belong to his proper party, and no longer represents any one but himself.

But it is otherwise with Mr. Horsman, one of the speakers approved by that portion of the aristocracy which plumes itself on its moderation, and does not scorn to think. Well, what said Mr. Horsman? While seeming greatly alarmed at the imminence of a war between America and England, while he avowed himself fully possessed with the absolute necessity of a position strictly neutral, which might avert that shocking misfortune, he took a lamentable pleasure in embittering resentments, in exaggerating grievances, as if a man should pour torrents of oil on the fire for fear of a conflagation. But what would you have? Mr. Horsman knew whom he was addressing; he could not be unaware that to seem eloquent he had only to set against the crime of slavery the *crime*, as he called it, of immediate emancipation.

In proclaiming the emancipation of the slaves, President Lincoln, according to Mr. Horsman, committed a *crime;* nay, more, a crime infinitely blacker and less pardonable than that committed, for instance, by a father who sells into slavery his own son —the son he had begotten of a negress! And why so? Not that Mr. Horsman defends the principle of slavery: he durst not go so far as that. But he asserts that to substitute immediate for gradual emancipation is to ordain a carnival of crime. Wonderful, is it not? So then Mr. Horsman forgets, and the House of Commons which cheered him forgets, that the civil war which has broken out in America broke out precisely because the men of the South would not have gradual emancipation at any price; because they burned, on the contrary, to extend slavery to the "Territories;" because they were impatient to overthrow, even if for that end they had to swim through seas of blood, the barriers raised by the Union against their abominable schemes; because, in one word, their "statesmen" have proclaimed to all the world

that they looked on slavery as the "corner-stone" of their society! How, too, could the planters ever lend themselves to that *gradual* emancipation which your tender heart, Mr. Horsman, makes the object of its philanthropic prayers? With the slaveholders of the South, man's property in man is more than a social right, more than a philosophic principle; it is an article of faith.

The "gentlemen" of the South, who are in arms against the "snobs" of the North, are mostly men excessively bigoted; they are of a religious disposition; they build numerous chapels; it is in the name of the Bible that the overseer's whip flays the back of a negro caught tripping; Stonewall Jackson's warlike heroism is equalled only by his devotion: on the eve of an action he himself prays and makes his soldiers pray to the God of Hosts.

Shall I speak about the temper of the Ministry? The English Government, to which we owe this much of justice, has maintained neutrality in its character of government. It has forborne from seeking a quarrel with the United States about the exercise of the right of blockade: it has stood out against the outcry for the recognition of the South; it has repelled the notion of a mediation which might lead through one tangle after another to an armed intervention. So far nothing could be better. But there is an official neutrality, and there is a moral neutrality. Has the Ministry observed the latter? Remember Mr. Gladstone's declaration! Has not Earl Russell, ay, Earl Russell himself, declared that the "subjugation" of the South by the North would be the greatest calamity that could happen? I don't blame him, of course, for saying what he thinks. But if so he thinks, need we be so astonished at the hostile attitude of the Americans in the North?

In truth it only needed the affair of the *Alabama* to fill up the measure of their grievances. At the news of each fresh blow struck by the pirate Semmes, of each vessel taken and burnt by the *Alabama*, they might well exclaim, "To England are we indebted for this disaster; in an English port was built that accursed vessel, and out of an English port she sailed; her evil exploits bear witness to a flagrant breach of English law, and, on the side of the Government, to a neglect made the more suspicious by their open sympathy with the South."

Since then, it is true, the Ministry, with a prompt and praiseworthy earnestness, has procured the seizure of the *Alexandra*,

which it had grounds for believing destined to complete the work of the *Alabama*.

For the rest, I don't pretend to say that all the wrong has been on England's side. Assuredly not. On both sides, unhappily, there are lawful subjects of complaint. What more offensive, for example, and less warrantable than the letter of the 9th April, addressed to the commander of the Federal fleet in the Gulf of Mexico by the American Minister Mr. Adams? that letter in which the Federal Admiral Dupont was requested to give free passage to Messrs. Howel and Zirman, who were not to be confounded with the English abettors of rebellion, favourers of fraudulent and dishonest undertakings. Arrogant to the last degree do people here pronounce this claim of Mr. Adams to specify which of the ships sailing from English ports are worthy or unworthy of his special protection. And people are right there.

Whatever may come of so many causes of irritation between the two countries, one thing seems clear, namely, that at this moment they dread a war at least as much as they desire it. The *Saturday Review*, which expresses the ideas of a very influential class, and cannot be suspected of any tenderness for the North, publishes this week an article which the author has tried to make as soothing as he can.

As for the two governments, their prudence is on a par with their responsibility. The seizure of the *Alexandra* here, and Mr. Seward's order given in America to forward unopened to their destination the letters entrusted for transmission to the *Peterhoff*, are satisfactory measures.

Only, I fear that this reluctance to pass the Rubicon may be due in both countries to other causes than the embarrassments of the passing hour.

The North has the South on its hands, and must look first of all to the danger that is most urgent.

England, on her side, is most anxious to preserve her freedom of action in view of the entanglements threatening the peace of Europe. The Russian answer to the notes of the three Powers has neither surprised nor reassured anybody. Conciliatory promises were expected, annulled beforehand by prudent reservations. How were the Poles, with whom faith has so often been broken, to be disarmed by promises? And how could the three Powers cheat themselves as to the meaning of those reservations? The

question then remains untouched. It is just where it was before the negotiations, which have proved only what was known already, the impossibility of untying the knot. But shall we, therefore, be driven to cut what cannot be untied? And in that case who would cut it?

It is certain that England is afraid to league herself with the French Government; nor less certain that she dreads to have it against her. This it is, I think, that makes her forbear towards America. She dislikes having too much on her hands at one time.

LETTER CLII.

HAUGHTY BEARING OF RUSSIA TOWARDS ENGLAND.

May 9th, 1863.

The effect produced in England by Russia's reply to the note of the St. James's Cabinet furnishes a singular vindication of those who, on this side the Channel, shrugged their shoulders when they heard talk of diplomatic interference on Poland's behalf as a remedy for the ills of that unhappy country. At last we can read for ourselves this answer so eagerly expected from Russia; and the mystification is complete. How hardy must be the optimism that would hold out against proofs like these! No wonder the *Times* growls under its breath, while the *Morning Post* exclaims, "Is that all? If so, we fear the notes of the three Powers were written in vain, and that Poland's independence, if achieved at all, can only be achieved at the sword's point."

Prince Gortschakoff's reply is certainly curious. It deserves a place in the literary collections meant for children of a certain age, under the heading of "diplomatic irony." It shows the supple style of a government office, and the ease with which it lends itself to an insolent dealing in handling of courtesies.

In the first place Lord Russell is informed, in terms of irreproachable politeness, that the first step towards understanding a treaty is to read it.

To speak frankly, the treaties of 1815, as invoked by Earl Russell, specify nothing; no, nothing which can seriously be made to tell against Russia.

True enough that they declare the kingdom of Poland irrevocably bound to Russia by its constitution; but, what constitution is meant? That point meets with no explanation in the last article of the Vienna treaty. The constitution which Alexander I. chose to give Poland was decreed by him after the treaties of 1815, as an act of his good pleasure, as the fruit of his imperial munificence, as a boon, accordingly, which he had the right to withdraw, and about which his successors would be entirely free to retrace their steps.

This constitution being set on one side, all we can ask of Russia, in pursuance of the stipulations accepted at Vienna, is to replace it by another; and to that the present emperor has probably no objection, provided he is left to settle things his own way, and that no one pretends to dictate the terms of the charter he is asked to give. Meanwhile Prince Gortschakoff talks of establishing in Poland a system of municipal institutions, embodying a germ for whose development he trusts to time and experience. What is there, then, of shortcoming with regard to the engagements formed by Russia in 1815? What clause is there in the Vienna treaties which specifies *the manner* in which the Duchy of Warsaw, transformed into a kingdom, should thenceforth be governed by the Czar?

In plain truth, it is absurd to invoke against Russia the treaties which gave up Poland as her prey, and thus lent the sanction of diplomacy to Poland's criminal partition. So far from their being justifiably used against Russia, it is Russia, on the contrary, who might with advantage use them against her opponents; and Prince Gortschakoff, in replying to Lord Russell, has not failed to do so. He has pierced the weak spot in the English minister's breast-plate; and so say many persons below their breath, though no one ventures to utter it aloud. Strange notion, truly, this of supporting a claim on Poland's behalf by means of the very act through which a victorious coalition solemnised her ruin, made the annihilation of her independence one of the conditions of European life, and tried to seal up for ever the stone upon her grave! Is it in the name of the treaties of 1815, and in the hope of taking refuge in them, that Poland has writhed under her chains? Is it for the sanctification of those treaties that she is striving at this moment with the blows of her scythes? No: what she demands, and rightly demands, is not a group of institutions more or less liberal, not a constitution more or less

strongly guaranteed: what Poland wants is, simply to be Poland. Why talk of gilding her chains, when all her effort is to break them? She says with Hamlet,

"To be, or not to be? that is the question."

And that is just what Russia will never agree to.

At heart the present emperor would not, perhaps, be averse from decreeing for Poland individual liberty, liberty of the press, and the other liberties thence flowing, if he was sure that in Polish hands such things would not be turned into a means of winning Poland's independence. "Let Poland forbear from striving after independence, and the Czar will ask nothing better than to make her free," is the sum of the explanations given by Prince Gortschakoff to Lord Napier. If Russia absolutely refuses Poland a separate budget, a separate army, a separate parliament, it is because she feels sure that the Emperor would cease to be King of Poland the day after he had made all those concessions to the Poles.

This being understood, it is clear that Lord Russell's note was not of a nature either to satisfy the victims or to convince the oppressors; and in the twofold relation of the treaties of 1815 restored to light, and the concessions demanded, the Russian minister's reply to the English minister is quite in keeping with what might have been foreseen.

But that is not the side of this answer which it most imports to bring out in relief. What renders it a masterpiece of insolence is the working out of the idea that, far from helping the Poles to shake off the Russian yoke, the governments of Europe ought, if they were well advised, to help Russia to extinguish in Europe the great conflagration of which Poland is just now the furnace; that is to say, "the Cosmopolitan Revolution."

Already, in his interview of the 9th March with Lord Napier, had Prince Gortschakoff expressed himself in these terms: "The Polish insurrection is the result of a democratic and social conspiracy, brewed in foreign capitals, from among which I cannot except London." What Prince Gortschakoff said to the ambassador, the latter in his despatch repeated to the minister. Russia sees no harm in the desire for a crusade, and even declares herself ready to join in it, provided the blows are aimed against those accursed revolutionists who have caused all the evil. She is no less keenly alive than England to the danger that threatens to

disturb the peace of Europe, and, in proof thereof, she proposes to make a speedy end of the European agitators, but for whom Poland would have continued to be happy, and would now be at rest. So you wish to see the cause of order and a wise freedom triumph in Poland? Well, I will point out a sure way of attaining the fulfilment of your wishes: set at work to calm this moral and material disorder which men are scheming to propagate in Europe, and you will end by drying up the source of the turmoil you foresee. Such, in brief, is the language used by Prince Gortschakoff to Lord Russell; such are the counsels set against his counsels; such the reproaches that meet his reproaches. The Prince charges him with abetting all the firebrands of the "cosmopolitan revolution," and is good enough to warn him against the folly of so doing.

It is worthy of remark, however, that nothing has yet turned up to prove that England has resented, as she ought to have done, the irony and the insults of that reply. No important mouthpiece of public opinion has burst out into furious comments, or assumed the tones of indignant reason.

In fact, England has no fancy just now to bring upon herself any serious dispute. If she had any wish to provoke a quarrel or merely to accept a challenge, she would, at the moment of my writing, be in the midst of war with America. And, in truth, nothing would have suited her better than to rid herself betimes of the rivalry of that great Northern republic who had so often provoked her, and had always given her cause for distrust. But she shuns adventures. Her gaze incessantly turned on France, she watches with anxiety every movement of a power fated to keep all Europe on the alert.

In the turn now taken by this Polish question, Englishmen may find some matter for reflection. No one here has failed to notice that Prince Gortschakoff's reply to the French Cabinet is very different from that addressed to Lord Russell.

In both of them, no doubt, may be found the same denunciations against the revolutionary spirit; but what in the second seems like banter or menace, in the former takes the shape of an affectionate compliment, and seems to attest the confidence which the Emperor Napoleon inspires in the Emperor Alexander.

LETTER CLIII.

LORD RUSSELL'S POLICY WITH REGARD TO RUSSIA.

May 11th, 1863.

To judge by what has just passed in the House of Lords, England is content to play a very sorry part in the Polish question.

Who would ever have guessed it? Earl Russell, even Earl Russell, most liberal, most sincerely liberal of English ministers, has just avowed in all frankness before a listening world,

That England has but a very dim, very limited trust in the success of her own efforts;

That the Poles should guard against the danger of treacherous illusions;

That the British Government has no idea of getting up a quarrel with Russia, or of going beyond the right of representing matters;

That a separate existence is undesirable for Poland, since no one clearly knows what constitutes Poland; and her reconstruction, if it embraced the Duchy of Posen and Galicia, could not fail to set Europe in a blaze;

That before all things we must count upon the generosity, the earnestness, and the liberalism of the Emperor Alexander II.;

That Prince Gortschakoff is wrong in ascribing the European movement in behalf of Poland solely to the artificers of revolutions; but it is quite true that moral and political vultures are attracted by the calamities of every war, as birds of prey are drawn by the smell of the corpses on every battle-field;

That there is nothing better to do than to trust in the power of public opinion, and still more in the protection of Heaven, which will not leave oppression unpunished, nor permit the continuance of so many sufferings.

Thus loudly does Earl Russell, speaking in the name of England, make profession of her helplessness! Mouth-piece of a people that prides itself on being *practical*, he believes in the virtue of a policy of words *Voces, voces, prætereaque nihil!* His sympathy towards Poland consists in denouncing as impossible

and chimerical that very separation which Poland demands, for which she is striving scythe in hand, and for which she is bent on paying with all the blood in her veins! Following M. Billault, Earl Russell avails himself of the shocking drama enacted on the banks of the Vistula to sing the virtues of the Czar! Following Prince Gortschakoff, he has his say against the cosmopolitan patriots, the "birds of prey," and, happily plagiarising the style of M. Dupanloup, he calls them "vultures." Lastly, like the pious Bishop of Orleans, he makes over to Providence the care of putting an end to all earthly ills, forgetting, alas! that never to this moment has history been aught but the epopee of triumphant wrong, and that in the eyes of religious philosophers the darkest, the most impenetrable of all mysteries lies contained in those four words, why does evil exist?

Not that Earl Russell is insensible to Poland's misfortunes; far otherwise. I owe him justice to this extent, that his goodness of heart has hurled him headlong into an abyss of contradictions.

For instance, the homage he pays to the generosity, earnestness, liberalism of the Czar does not withhold him from calling to mind how much the institutions given by the present Emperor to the Poles have lent their shadow to all kinds of tyrannous deeds; how arbitrary arrests have multiplied; how the prisons have been filled with wretches against whom no charge was pressed, who were torn from their beds to be thrown into a dungeon; how the floors of churches have been stained with the blood of men kneeling in prayer; how in Warsaw conscription and proscription have become synonymous; and how, with such memories to think of, with such wrongs rankling in their hearts, it is impossible for the Poles to have the slightest faith either in the promises or in the institutions that bear the stamp of the policy of St. Petersburg.

The same logic comes out in the following passage, which deserves quoting word for word, as a model of its kind:—

"It will be said, perhaps, that it is hard for an emperor whose intentions are so praiseworthy to become an object of distrust, and to see his benefactions spurned with contempt; but it is a natural and legitimate result of despotism that its caprices should destroy confidence, and that its promises for the future are not believed, because its promises have been broken in the past. If this be the case, have we not some ground for advising the concession to the Poles and the scrupulous observance of the constitution granted them in 1815, by Alexander I.?"

Well, what say you to this? It is necessary to give back to the Poles the constitution of 1815, *because* that constitution never has been allowed a serious trial, and it is the nature of despotism to break its promises! Such is the style of reasoning which a minister allows himself in this country in the midst of the House of Lords!

The mind pauses in bewilderment as we compare the language uttered by the English minister in the sitting of last Friday with that uttered in the famous despatch of the 10th April, when he charged Lord Napier to warn the Emperor of Russia that the troubles continually recurring in Poland "might under possible circumstances provoke complications of a very serious character." And mark that, after the transmission of this despatch, he expressed himself in terms still more peremptory, still more threatening. When Baron Brunow asked if the note of the British Government was of a pacific nature, he was not afraid to reply, "If the Emperor's government takes no conciliatory steps, *dangers* and complications may supervene, which at this moment are not foreseen."

That was plain and tolerably sharp. What, then, has happened since so materially to soften Lord Russell's state of feeling towards Russia?

What has happened? Prince Gortschakoff has inflicted on the pride of England one of the most galling rebuffs it has ever received. Not only has the Russian minister rejected the advice of the British Government, not only has he with chilling scorn refrained from giving any of the promises he had been asked to give; but being in the wrong as against all the world, he has shown himself, sad to tell, in the right against England, so bad a choice had the latter made of her ground!

What more ridiculous, indeed, than to invoke on behalf of Poland the treaties of 1815? On the contrary, it is to the advantage of Russia that the treaties should be invoked which surrendered panting Poland as her prey, the treaties which sanctioned former partitions, the treaties which turned a deed of robbery into an article of the international code, the treaties which gave diplomatic absolution to the jointly sharing powers! To appeal to the stipulations of Vienna, to point them out to the reverent gaze of Europe, to insist on their observance, what was this but an acknowledgment that the Poles are and ought to remain Russian subjects; that they have lost all right to self-

government; that they cannot protest against the crime of spoliation to which they were victims without rebelling against the public right of Europe? I should like to know whether the Poles are fighting and dying for the sake of the treaties of 1815!

Useless to talk of the guarantees therein stipulated: under this head I do not for one instant hesitate to say that, as a discussion about texts, Prince Gortschakoff's answer to Earl Russell is triumphant, is overwhelming.

The latter, in his despatch, had recourse to the convenient resource of garbled quotations; he had quoted only these words from the first article of the Vienna treaty: ', The Grand-Duchy of Warsaw is erected into the kingdom of Poland, to be indissolubly bound by her constitution to the Russian Empire." Prince Gortschakoff completes the quotation: "The Poles, subject respectively to Russia, Austria, and Prussia, shall obtain a representation and national institutions, *regulated after that mode of political existence which each of the governments they belong to may deem it useful and convenient to grant them.*"

What are we to conclude from this? That Russia, in the very terms of the treaties imprudently brought up against her, is judge of the kind of representation and the mode of national institutions which it suits her to bestow on Poland. It is for her to see in what manner she may devour the prey thus abandoned to her!

And it is on treaties like these that England takes her stand? Absurd. The only language which a great nation fond of justice and humanity could utter, was this:—

No title is valid against right. Conquest itself is only in large what robbery is in little. The fault which Europe committed in the eighteenth century by allowing the hateful partition of Poland, she is expiating in the nineteenth by the deadly cares and continual alarms which the results of the partition are causing her. The horrors of which Poland is just now the theatre, are such as call for the interference, not only of this or that power, but of the human conscience itself. Not in the name of the treaties of 1815 do we make our protest; in all that touches Poland they sanctioned what they ought to have blasted and annihilated. We protest in the name of justice, in behalf of the interests of Europe, from which passing events show plainly enough that justice is inseparable. We have

reason on our side, and for her service it is that God has given us strength. A word to the wise is enough.

Impossible! will the clever ones exclaim. Diplomacy knows not such language as that.

Yes! I am well aware of it; I am ready to allow that the wisdom of diplomacy is that of *Philinte*; I will even own, if they like, that until the world has attained the age of reason, diplomacy could not do with any other. But what does that prove? That it goes out of its province when it betakes itself to combating or scolding oppression. If it is absurd for it to plead in truthful language the cause of truth, and to depend on justice to uphold justice, why has it not the good sense to be silent, and to let things alone, let them go their way? I can fancy the French Government grounding its interference on the need of saving humanity from being trampled under foot, and I could fancy it still better if Prince Gortschakoff's reply had not seemed so satisfactory to the *Moniteur;* but that such a man as Lord Russell should appeal in behalf of Poland to the very treaties which have diplomatically sealed her ruin, and that to this first fault he has added the avowal that mighty England has in the lightness of her heart laid herself open to speak in vain, this it is which I can hardly understand, and I blush thereat for free peoples.

Nevertheless, if there is a riddle in this, the answer to the riddle is not absolutely beyond our power to discover.

LETTER CLIV.

WHAT PARALYSES ENGLAND.

May 12th, 1863.

ENGLAND is afraid of war; that is the truth. Her sympathy for Poland is very sincere; it is awakened, moreover, by uneasiness at the encroachments of Russia; but it has nothing warlike in it. England neither wishes to draw the sword, nor will she draw it unless she is absolutely compelled to do so. In that case she would fling the scabbard far away; for the Saxon race has something of the bull-dog's nature. But that very thing

stops her. She is afraid of having to stay too long with her feet in blood.

As an abstract question this repugnance does her honour, and has nothing in it dissonant from the manners of a free people. War bears witness to the childhood of nations; the need of appealing to its rude tribunal shows plainly enough that, despite all the efforts of science to bring men together, in spite of steam and railways, and electricity turned into a messenger of human thought, we have not yet emerged from the barbarous ages. How should strife be other than a shocking calamity, when victory itself is so often fatal to the victor? On this point England at any rate can have no doubts. Crushed with taxes, she drags to this day, and drags with groans, the ball which was fastened to her foot by William Pitt, on the day when that haughty minister took the oath of Hannibal against France.

But if war is execrable as the fruit of hatred or ambition, it is worth while to remember that, until we have organised the community of nations by establishing an Amphictyonic Council made up of their genuine representatives, war remains the only known process for placing force at the service of right.

On the other hand, the best way of avoiding war is not to be too much afraid of it; still less to betray that fear.

Now, with regard to Poland, it is here that England from the outset has acted unwisely. Not one of her journals but has given its vote for peace, after having exhausted against Russia the vocabulary of war; at not one of the numerous meetings held in favour of Poland did the speakers fail to explain one after the other, with a voice loud enough to be heard at St. Petersburg, that threats would not be followed by blows. The Thunderer was pleased to inform the world, before he hurled his bolt, that it was a good-natured bolt, and that all would be limited to a few flashes of sheet lightning.

Is it wonderful that Prince Gortschakoff deemed that as good as spoken, and answered accordingly?

One would think that this answer of the Russian minister, in form so measured, but in reality so haughty, so sarcastic, so disdainfully calm, should have either made England wroth, or warned her of the discomforts of a policy that seems to tremble while it scolds. But no: so strong is the fear of war that, even after Prince Gortschakoff's reply,—nay, more than ever after his

reply, were the avowals of peaceful sentiments—peaceful, at any price—redoubled.

Lord Russell hastened to expiate by a magnificent eulogy of the Czar the blunder of having mourned over the ills of Poland; he has taken care to reassure him as to the consequences of the British cabinet's intervention, by declaring, first that the intervention would evaporate in words; next that it nohow aimed at the impossible independence of an impossible Poland; and at last he went so far as to supply the expression, "vultures," to the anathemas of the Russian foreign-office against the "cosmopolitan revolutionists."

If Prince Gortschakoff is not satisfied, he is hard to please.

But yet stranger language than Lord Russell's was employed at the same sitting by Lords Shaftesbury and Harrowby.

There is nothing indeed to add to what Lord Shaftesbury said about the impossibility of Poland and Russia henceforth living together in harmony. He compared the dominion of the latter over the former to that deadly tree which kills anyone who may rest imprudently beneath its shade. By a lengthy recapitulation of facts well-known, but set forth in terms of rare vehemence, he proved that Sir Cresswell Cresswell had never in England been required to judge a divorce-suit, where the demand for separation was so powerfully pleaded. He called to mind, as a striking instance of the unanimity of the Polish uprising, that the two millions of Polish Jews who, in 1830, were arrayed on the emperor's side, had on the contrary, in 1863, gone over to the insurrection; and he quoted the remark of the Chief Rabbi, who, on the Grand-Duke's observing, "You know the Emperor is your father," had answered, "True, the Emperor is our father, but Poland is our mother; and when the husband beats his wife, it is for their mother that the children should take up arms."

In short Lord Shaftesbury, speaking in the name of an imposing meeting held at Guildhall, ended by asking that the British Government should declare the kingdom of Poland thenceforth separated from the Russian empire.

As for Lord Harrowby, he was still more peremptory. According to him Russia has forfeited the title bestowed on her by the Treaty of Vienna; and he urged the British Government to make solemn proclamation of that forfeiture.

After that, you think perhaps that Lord Shaftesbury and Lord

Harrowby will at least have forborne from any avowal likely to betray a feeling of weakness? Well, they have not forborne. No war! "We will not have war at any price," that is the end of their lordships' reasoning.

But of what use then your knitted brows, my lords? And what do you hope for?

I admire Lord Shaftesbury's candour in imagining that public opinion will convert the Czar and his ministers, that Russia will be but too happy to release her prey, that the Emperor Alexander II., after reading his lordship's speech and an article in the *Times*, will suddenly forget that he has guns at his back, and stretching out his arms towards Poland, whose independence he will have acknowledged, will say to her in his sweetest tones, "Let us embrace and have no more of this." In truth one seems to be dreaming when we see men of a ripe age rocked in these childish illusions. Would not people say that only now is *public opinion* grown alive to what goes on yonder? Let Lord Shaftesbury take the trouble to read himself again. He himself assures us in his own speech that, never since the first partition of Poland, has public opinion, the opinion of the civilised world, ceased protesting against the spoliation and the spoilers. Of what use has that been? We are, if I mistake not, in 1863, and the first partition of Poland took place in 1772. It must be allowed that the conversion of Russia by public opinion takes a good deal of time. And it must also be allowed that up to this moment the conversion is not a whit advanced, if we may judge by Prince Gortschakoff's answer to the journals, the meetings, the addresses, and the despatches of England.

Not that I deny the efficacy of opinion: Heaven forbid! But that efficacy displays itself only in the strength of the pressure exercised on those whom the idea assails. Despotism is not to be converted; it surrenders. To catechise it, is perfectly useless and borders on the ridiculous. If it were capable of being converted, it would not have put itself in the way to be so; it would not be despotism.

The people of England are a sensible people, and cannot possibly fail to understand that. How then account for their attitude in the Polish question?

The explanation, to my thinking, lies in the insuperable distrust inspired by the French Government. When she saw

France ready to take Poland's cause by the hand, England, as a free country, did not like to seem indifferent to the triumph of a just cause. Therefore it was she dared the adventure of an intervention—in words. But to pass from words to deeds, that is a step she would only have taken if she had deemed it possible to move in company with France. But in that possibility she has never believed; still less has she believed in it since the revelations of Baron Brunow; and, to speak plainly, the nature of things indisposes her to any such belief.

LETTER CLV.

CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS AND THE INCOME-TAX.

May 13th, 1863.

Last week a strange and important event took place. Four or five days ago the neighbourhood of Downing Street was in great commotion; the famous Ministerial street was the scene of an excitement certainly unwonted, and the stairs leading to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's room were thronged with people. It might have been called a real invasion.

A deputation, or rather a respectable mob, in which figured the Duke of Cambridge, several bishops, including him of London, and great personages of all kinds, were come to protest against one of Mr. Gladstone's financial schemes.

What was the matter, then, and why that unusual emotion? In the first place, you must remember that in England there exists a multitude of charitable institutions; that these institutions have been founded and maintained by voluntary offerings; that nineteen-twentieths of these "charities" have grown out of legacies; that they are administered independently; that the State has no part in them, and therefore they escape the control of society regarded as a collective entity; that they afford the clergy a powerful means of proselytism and ascendancy; that they place a large amount of patronage at the disposal of a certain number of wealthy persons; and, in short, that the advantages they offer are found mixed up with a good many abuses.

After this preamble, you must know that these charitable foundations are exempted from income-tax.

Is the exemption just? Is it commanded by sound policy? Does it rest on a truly philosophic principle—on a right ordering of social interests?

Mr. Gladstone thinks it does not.

He starts from the plea that such an exemption is really a gift granted by the State to the establishments in question. The less these pay, the more of necessity have the bulk of contributors to pay to the former; and that is no trifle, for the extending of the income-tax to charitable foundations would produce to the public treasury £250,000 a year.

It is important, therefore, to determine whether it be expedient or not to grant this or that individual, at the moment of his death, the power to transfer as he pleases, according to his fancy, under colour of charity, the whole or a part of his fortune from the class of taxable incomes to that of incomes not taxable.

Granted that the right of bequeathal may be recognised as a deduction from the right of property; still, the adding thereto of an exorbitant privilege, which cannot benefit one side without increasing the burden on the other, is what Mr. Gladstone finds and declares to be unjust.

In reality, a man who, at the moment of leaving the world, withdraws from taxation a property of which, after all, he disposes on behalf of some establishment, only under the influence of certain views, in conformity with certain ideas, and by virtue of certain conditions of which he has to give account to himself alone—such a man levies on his fellow-citizens a tax equivalent to that shirked by his donation; he compels them to become the helpmates of his own purposes; he lays on them the duty of bearing part in bounties on the character and aim of which he has not consulted them, and all the honour of which he intends to keep for himself. He is charitable at their cost. Look at that poor little clerk who works day and night to earn barely his two hundred pounds a year, and is, moreover, burdened with a family. Must an addition be made to the income-tax which presses upon his income because it has pleased some wealthy personage to ascribe to his death the importance of his life—to make for himself a following beyond the grave, and to keep on spending after he has ceased to live?

Besides, we should understand what things deserve greeting with the name of charity. Charity, in the high and beautiful meaning of the word, conveys an idea of privation; it supposes one person who receives, but it supposes also another who gives. What can he *give* who in giving deprives himself of nothing?

This, however, is the kind of charity which in England is now exempt from income-tax, while the tax is inexorable in its pursuit of genuine charity—that of the man who, full of life and health, retrenches from his own enjoyments all that goes to enlarge the poor man's share.

So thinks Mr. Gladstone; so thinks Lord Palmerston; so think all the members of the Ministry. And therefore the Government had resolved to lay before the House of Commons the question of extending the income-tax to charitable foundations.

But hardly had the scheme got wind when there arose an unbounded clamour. What! tax the bread of the needy, the bed of the sick, the arm-chair of the infirm, the blind man's staff, the education of the poor man's child? Such was the cry sent forth in concert by princes, lords, bishops, archdeacons, the pious souls of Exeter Hall, and the philanthropists of the *Times*.

Mr. Gladstone's financial rapacity and his harsh philosophy have been loudly denounced by the governors of Christ's Hospital, which, founded once on a time for the most wretched of the wretched, has come—through the increase of its wealth, combined with the effects of patronage—to educate, instead of poor orphans, the children of persons with an income of two, three, four, even five hundred pounds a year. The materialistic doctrines of Mr. Gladstone have been treated as they deserve by the administrators of Saint Bartholomew's, who assert that an income-tax of £820 would force them to send away 500 sick, forgetting that at this rate they themselves—the remark and the calculation are Mr. Gladstone's—devour 150 sick in entertainments which cost them £220! In short, this hapless Minister of Finance, who never suspected how blameworthy he was in this matter, has provoked an uprising of humanity such as makes one shudder.

But just see how obstinate a financier can be! Mr. Gladstone held on; he swore to himself that if the House of Commons denied him its approval, it should at least hear him speak. He said, with the metromaniac of Piron—

> "Dût il dormir debout,
> L'auditeur entendra ma pièce jusqu' au bout."

But, far from sending his hearers to sleep, Mr. Gladstone kept them terribly awake. Never had his words been so vainly potent. That refining tendency, of which he can never entirely rid himself, was overwhelmed by the rush of a kind of sullen wrath which broke out in every sentence. He knew beforehand that he would have to withdraw his scheme; he felt that, if truth was with him, his audience was all against him; and the certainty of his defeat stamped his eloquence with an impress of passion and haughtiness altogether exciting. He spoke—and as you listened there was no mistaking the fact—not to the House, but to an assembly numerous and imposing in a very different way, that sat afar, very far indeed, from the House, and above it!

People had been making a mighty noise about the poor who would have to be discharged from every hospital, the orphans of clergymen who would lose their paltry pittances, the widows of dissenting ministers who would be reft of their miserable pensions of thirty or forty pounds. In answer to these sad wailings, Mr. Gladstone wittily compared the manœuvres of the "charitable army" to those reviews where they place the tall and strong men in the front rank, and those of sorry appearance behind; or rather to those battles which are won from a distance by old women and children, dressed up like fierce warriors. He showed what pains had been taken to plead only the cause of "charities" really commendable, and how carefully they had thrown into the shade those which deserve at the utmost to be only tolerated. For in the matter of charities there are important distinctions to lay down, and of this there seems to have been no suspicion among those who the other day attacked Downing Street.

Turgot and Dr. Chalmers have fairly proved that the useful charities are those which have no tendency to create the ills they are designed to assuage, and that the baneful charities are those which, on the contrary, begin, like the spear of Achilles, by causing the wound, safe to heal it afterwards.

To the latter class belong the foundling hospitals, which only exchange the crime of maternal infanticide for that of a kind of moral infanticide, ensure the blessings of mystery to the maternity that foregoes its office, and hold out a premium to concubinage by setting the charms of pleasure free from the burdens it involves.

To this latter class belong also certain donations like those of Jarvis, whom Mr. Gladstone very pertinently called to mind as

an example. They were destined to relieve the poor of certain parishes, and their effect was to change them into so many nests of pauperism. There are charities which demoralise the people, which teach them to hold out their hands without blushing, familiarise them with the idea of a primitive degradation, cause them to lose more time in running after the hoped-for alms than they would need to place themselves, by means of work, in the way of despising them. What claim have charities like these to any social countenance?

What ought to be encouraged is the charity of the living, which addresses itself to the needy—not that of the dead, which offers periodical temptation to importunity and idleness; the charity which involves sacrifices, and has its source in a feeling of humanity and justice—not that which costs nothing to the giver, and looks only to the triumph whether of his vanity or his aversions, or of his particular ideas.

Mr. Gladstone pointed out with force the disadvantages of those charities whose *sine quâ non* condition is, that they who would profit by them shall go to church: an admirable way, indeed, of remunerating hypocrisy, and of making the spiritual appetite depend on the temporal! He quoted, as a matter of personal knowledge, the fact of a legacy of £150,000 left to the poor from no other motive on the giver's part than his hatred towards his own relations.

The answer to that you can guess: people said, "What matters the motive if the result is advantageous? Why turn men away from doing good, even though they do it under the influence of blameable motives? What has here to be considered is, not the intention, more or less pure, of him who gives; it is the interest of him who receives, the interest of the poor."

Yes, undoubtedly; but the question, as put by Mr. Gladstone, is this; since the founders of charitable establishments affix to the advantage of profiting by their gifts conditions which perpetuate the dependence of the obliged, is there no better way of providing for the interests of the poor, and is the excellence of that method so manifest, so incontestable, so absolute, that we ought to sacrifice to it the laws of distributive justice, and the principle which forbids our taxing the bread of labour for the benefit of the bread of alms?

To be sure, there are some charitable institutions which call for the protection of the State; but the State could not grant its

protection at haphazard, with eyes shut. It is well at least that those who would have its countenance should accept its control, and it is not lawful for it to dispose of the public money without overlooking its disbursement. If the corporations whose existence has up to this moment escaped the control of Parliament, of the press, of public opinion, can prove that the exemption whose continuance they demand is for the public benefit, well and good; but then, let them show their accounts.

Mr. Gladstone's speech has been greatly admired; but its conclusions were condemned in advance by the House of Commons, and on that point men's minds were made up. Lord Palmerston has just declared that the Government withdrew the scheme. That declaration the prime minister made with much boldness and dignity, avowing that Mr. Gladstone's opinion was that of the whole cabinet, and never concealing the hope that public opinion would some day be recalled to sounder ideas.

One doubt still occurs to me. Have Mr. Gladstone and the Government of which, on this occasion, he has been the mouthpiece, measured fairly the immense compass of the question they have just been setting before philosophers and thinkers? For to see in it nothing but an affair of finance and income-tax, is childish. Have they taken sufficient account of the conditions of a society in which there would be no need to point out the vices of certain charitable foundations, or of those so christened? Do they understand the proud position they must assign to *labour*, before exercising the right to wage war against that which labour, assured and remunerated, would render absolutely useless? Mr. Gladstone is the very man, I think, to have foreseen the thoroughly democratic issues of the idea he has just been promulgating. But Lord Palmerston? But his colleagues?

LETTER CLVI.

A STRANGE SENTENCE.

May 15th, 1863.

Do twelve married men constitute the best jury that can be found in regard to a cause affecting things matrimonial? The contrary would seem to be shown by the result of a very amusing trial, which is here, at this moment, employing the thousand trumpets, not of Fame, exactly, but of journalism.

It is about an affair which, after threatening to become tragic, appears, for the public at least, to have turned into a comedy.

In England, the world of authors who are actors also, counts among its best known representatives a Mr. Dion Boucicault. As an actor Mr. Boucicault has given proof of talent. As an author he has given proof of success. The "Colleen Bawn!" What woman in London but feels her heart beat at the words "Colleen Bawn?" What marvellous triumphs do those words not recall to the mind of the manager of the Adelphi theatre! This "Colleen Bawn" was a young Irishwoman, a poor little peasant girl, who succeeded in touching the heart of a young man of family, to the extent of getting secretly married to him. The young man's mother——but, heaven forgive me! I was about to give you an analysis of this play, thanks to which the Adelphi of London has been placed at one bound as high as the Boulevard Saint Martin at Paris. Enough for me to tell you that in this piece the young girl in question was seen carried in a boat by a ruffian to the very middle of a lake, where he tried to drown her without success. The British public is not exacting, and emotions conveyed to it through the eyes send it into ecstacies. The "Colleen Bawn" became the rage. The number of representations reached a figure unexampled in the history of dramatic successes, a figure impossible to remember. The whole of London ran to see that young girl, and to see how she happened to escape drowning on the stage. Mr. Boucicault became, until further notice, a great man.

Alas! Would to heaven he had never made people talk of him in any other way, and that, after being author of a pathetic

tragedy, he had never become the hero of a comedy! But ill-luck chose, first that he should set up a theatre; next that he should engage Mrs. Jordan, a distinguished actress; then that this actress, a married woman, should be separated from her husband; then that this husband should belong to the jealous order; and, lastly, that Mr. Boucicault should not have had due misgivings of the danger involved in visiting ladies too often by night.

So, one evening when Mr. Boucicault was at Mrs. Jordan's, No. 60, Pall Mall, up comes Mr. Jordan, knocking violently at the door as a man who knew the reason why. The Romans, on their return from travelling, took care not to show themselves to their wives without giving them timely warning. But Mr. Jordan, who is an actor, and who, though long parted from his wife, loved her, it seems, in the fashion of Othello, Mr. Jordan did not deem himself bound to respect the traditions of ancient delicacy. He had caught sight of the rash visitor and burned to say two words to him. The lady, suspecting nothing, opens the door; and lo! the husband darts raging into the house, clambers up four stairs at a time, breaks into every room, searches every nook and corner, bellows, storms, raises an infernal uproar. Mark that he was in a private lodging-house, tenanted by lodgers who had nothing at all to do with the affair.

The landlady makes her appearance, half asleep, with a candle in her hand. She and her candle are thrust aside. The right of search demanded by Mr. Jordan is absolute; he allows no exception, no reserves; not satisfied with rummaging his wife's room, he will search, if you please, the whole house, from cellar to garret. "But the lodgers, my dear sir?" Oh, indeed! So much the worse for the lodgers!

At this moment a worthy man, one Colonel Gibbon, quietly returned from his club home to his lodgings, which, for his ill-luck, were in this very No. 60, Pall Mall. He found the house all upside down; he went upstairs, wanted to enter his own bedroom. But stop! Mr. Jordan tells him, or as good as tells him, that, even were he "the little corporal," he should not pass. In fact, it so happened that the celebrated author of "The Colleen Bawn," not knowing where to hide, had sought refuge in the absent lodger's room, not without taking the precaution to lock himself in, just as they do in pieces of M. Scribe's school. The poor colonel, unaware of the former part of the story, insisted on

going to bed; and the husband, too enraged to express himself with the needful clearness, swore he would sooner stand sentry at the door to all eternity. Thereupon a mighty quarrel, darkening yet more what needed clearing up; and the colonel, calling a policeman, gave Mr. Jordan, as they say here, "in charge." So off they started for the nearest police-station. There, but there only, did they come to an understanding; and, after five minutes' explanation, each was sent to his own home.

In the meantime the hero of the adventure, still as in those pieces of Scribe, had got away. Imagine the husband's rage. Having missed the culprit, or the man he took for one, he declared that the innocent at least should not escape him, and he sued for damages for false imprisonment—would you ever have believed it?—this luckless Colonel Gibbon, whose only crime was wishing to enter his own bedroom at the hour for going to bed.

The oddest thing is that, according to the jury's verdict, the colonel was condemned in twenty-five pounds damages.

Look for a moment at this specimen of human justice! Colonel Gibbon, by calling in the policeman, did, under the circumstances, render everyone a service; he rendered it to the husband, whom he saved from the consequences of his own fury; to the wife, whose position threatened to become frightful; to Mr. Boucicault, whose life was, perhaps, in danger; to the landlady, who should have hastened to put an end to the disorder and the scandal of which her house was the scene; and yet he alone paid for the damage done.

Of course, in marking him out, Mr. Jordan's only idea was to avenge himself on his wife by giving the widest possible notoriety to the adventure. But that is no reason why an honourable man should be punished by a fine of six hundred and twenty-five francs for having done what anyone else would have done in his place.

It is well enough that an angry or suspicious husband should have the right to enter his wife's room, but that his wrongs or his suspicions bestow on him the right to take possession of a private lodging-house, there to act as its master, to take up his station wherever he thinks fit, and to let fall on peaceful strangers the consequences of his domestic vexations, all that is utterly inadmissible.

There is, therefore, but one cry throughout the English press, alike in favour of the colonel and against the jury who have just

been dealing him a blow so unexpected. There remains for him an appeal, and it is viewed as all but certain that so strange a sentence will be quashed. So, indeed, it already is, by a court more powerful than all the courts put together—by public opinion.

In France the judges have given prevalence to the foolish idea that justice would no longer be respected on the day when people began publicly to discuss its decrees. As if a judge could only be respected on condition of being held infallible, which everyone knows he is not! In this country the press makes careful scrutiny into every verdict of a jury, into every judgment given; it discusses motives, weighs their worth, condemns unjust or ill-considered awards, and even denounces them, according to the gravity of the case. Is harm done thereby to the respect we owe to justice? None at all. It produces the very opposite effect, for the very simple reason that justice having continually to justify its titles to respect, behaves so as to be always respectable. In this matter, as in many others, control is the guarantee for law, and freedom the true condition of order.

LETTER CLVII.

IRELAND AND THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

May 29th, 1863.

Matters pertaining to religion have, during the last few days, occupied a considerable space in England's history.

On the same identical day, by a curious coincidence, the interests of the Church absorbed the attention of the three great representative bodies of this country, to wit, the House of Commons, the House of Lords, and the clerical Parliament called Convocation.

On the same identical day it was discussed:—

In the House of Commons, whether the Protestant Church of Ireland should remain untouched;

In the House of Lords, whether something might not be erased from the formidable list of ecclesiastical oaths;

In Convocation, the upper house, whether there were grounds for at length taking some decisive measures against the audacious contradictor of the Pentateuch, Bishop Colenso.

Grave and solemn debates! Debates of an incalculable significance, and which mark one of the phases of the movement in the intellectual life of the English!

At the first blush, the questions which I have just indicated may seem of secondary importance. But let them be fathomed to their lowest depths, for there is not one of them that does not closely affect vital interests; not one that does not speak alike to the heart, the mind, and the conscience; not one that does not awaken a whole world of ideas.

Each of them is worth our while to pause to consider.

Is there anything incompatible between a democratic system and the existence of an Established Church? This incompatibility appears to result from several fundamental considerations.

In the first place, wherever a given system of religious instruction is officially recognised, specially protected and endowed by the State, it is very difficult for the government not to look for a support for its policy in such a system, and to use as auxiliaries those who have the charge of education—a state of things which has the double disadvantage of corrupting the essence of religion and of placing liberty in peril.

Secondly, it is contrary to the nature of the democratic system that there should be in the bosom of society a class invested with permanent functions, holding themselves apart from, or, rather, above the people, lording it over them by that which has the firmest hold upon the imagination, and forming, as it were, a sacred class placed between heaven and earth.

Lastly, justice and equality are opposed to any section of citizens, however small a minority they may constitute, being constrained to pay for the propagation of doctrines which they regard as false and pernicious.

That these considerations should not yet have much weight in England is easily accounted for, seeing that England is an aristocratic country. The aristocracy and the Established Church are two powers which stand in mutual need of one another.

This has always been, and still is perfectly understood by the Tories, and was loudly proclaimed by Mr. Disraeli in the month of November, 1861, in the celebrated speech in which he represented the stability of the institutions of England as reposing upon the intimate union between the Church and the State, The absurd and iniquitous tax known by the name of Church

Rates, though incessantly attacked, has not yet been abolished. I should rather say that the more the House of Commons is pressed upon this point, the less does the question seem likely to be solved. What further evidence is needed to illustrate the influence of the Established Church upon politics?

The history of England furnishes numerous and terrible examples of the infinite danger to liberty that may arise out of the prevalence of such an influence. Is it necessary for me to recal that Act of Uniformity of 1661, which converted into a crime the refusal to conform oneself to the Established Church; or the still more monstrous Act which placed between every nonconformist minister and any town represented in Parliament a distance of five miles, which could not be encroached upon?

Everybody knows that the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, rendered obligatory, had for their object not only the defence of the Protestant religion against the assaults of popery, but also to subject the sects of dissenters to the despotism of the Established Church. The seven bishops who were tried and acquitted in 1688, after being confined in the Tower for having protested against religious tyranny, were not Catholics, but Protestants: "God bless your Majesty! We hope that you are in favour of Dr. Sacheverell and the Church!" such was the cry uttered round about the carriage of Queen Anne by an imbecile populace, as they came from listening to sermons in which the Southwark parson, a fanatical ally of the Tories, stirred them up to sedition in order to better insure the principle of passive obedience. No one can say how long would have lasted the labour-throes of intellectual liberty in England, had not, by good fortune, the ambition of power speedily brought about a collision between Whigs and Tories, when the oppression of the Established Church was combated by the former as a means of gaining a victory over their rivals.

Thanks to the consequences of this struggle, to the good sense of the nation, and also to the Protestant line of reasoning from which it cannot entirely withdraw itself, the action of an Established Church has ceased, in England, to be an intolerable evil. But where that action is exercised in a manner to disgust the understanding of every reasonable man, and the conscience of every just man, is in Ireland.

In every other country the established religion, where there

is one, is that of the great majority of the people; whereas in Ireland the established religion is that of a very small minority. Lord Brougham, in his book upon the British Constitution, published in 1861, admits that the Catholics in Ireland constitute three-fourths of the population, while the members of the Established Church constitute only one-tenth, and the dissenters rather less than one-tenth. In other words, the established religion is that of about 750,000 individuals, while the religion discountenanced by the State is that of six millions of men.

In the endeavour to implant Protestantism in Ireland, the Catholic clergy have been despoiled of their livings, and their spoils given to the ministers of a form of worship introduced from abroad. The product of voluntary donations, augmented by what proceeds from marriages, baptisms, and masses, forms the entire revenue of the former; while the latter are in possession of 1400 livings, the revenues of which exceed £600,000, without reckoning the revenue of the Chapter which is £55,000, or the Episcopal revenues which exceed £150,000.

In 1831 there was laid before the House of Commons a statistical report, by which it was shown that the extent of the land allotted to the archbishops and bishops of the Protestant Church in Ireland was 669,274 acres; so that, as Mr. Dillwyn justly remarked in last Tuesday's sitting, it is from the very soil of Ireland that means are drawn to salary the ministers of a religion which the Irish people look upon as the most dangerous of heresies.

Is it just?

Never, as Mr. Dillwyn said, was anything of the kind dreamt of, either in Canada, or India.

Is it politic?

The answer to this question is very simple. To maintain in Ireland the Established Church there are needed 21,000 soldiers and 12,450 constables.

There is no room to question the fact that what, more than any other thing, irritates the Irish, exasperates them, fires their blood, gnaws at their heart, is the domination of priests who, in their eyes, are wolves at the door of the sheepfold.

It is beside the point to inquire if their own religious creed is more enlightened than the creed they thrust from them. No one disputes their being, for the most part, of a crass ignorance. That they are superstitious, that they are fanatical, that they love

the Pope with a slavish love, is not to be denied. But nothing so much contributes to bury them in their bogs as the great and permanent injustice of which the Church installed in their midst, at their expense, and in spite of them, affords the spectacle. The more it is sought to draw them to the Protestant worship by such means, the more do they attach themselves to Catholicism. The precarious situation of the Catholic priests, compared with the privileged situation of the ministers of the Established Church, far from impairing the influence of the former, surrounds them with a sort of sacred prestige. They have the appearance of being oppressed by the conquerors, the masters of the country, and that very circumstance identifies them with a people who, plunged in misery, humiliated, famished, attribute all their woes to the ascendancy of an alien race. The Irish Catholic priest, on his part, derives, as may easily be imagined, from such a state of things an extraordinary power to inflame their hatred and perpetuate their resentment. A member of the present Cabinet, Mr. Milner Gibson, exclaimed in 1845: "Do for Ireland what you will, so long as you maintain there an Established Church, you will never prevent the Irish from seeing in it an effect of conquest and the stigma of their degradation." It is under this aspect that the Irish Catholic priest never fails to depict the Protestant Establishment. And thus it comes to pass that Ireland, instead of constituting a strength for England, is a cannon ball riveted to her foot.

It was therefore a question of grave importance which Mr. Dillwyn mooted on Tuesday last, when he asked that a Committee should be formed for the purpose of inquiring what was best to be done with reference to the endowment of the Protestant Church of Ireland.

At the present time the revenues of that Church are beyond all proportion to the work of which they are supposed to be the remuneration. There is a parish, the pastor of which enjoys a stipend of £330 per annum, and whose flock consists of twenty-four persons. A rich shepherd, in truth, for such a modest little fold! Mr. Dillwyn expressed the wish that at least some attention might be given to find out to what urgent wants might be applied the surplus of revenues recognised as necessary and becoming. It was certainly not asking for much, and the orator, who, in this instance, was speaking in the name of the Liberal party, invoked the support of the most notable members of the

present Ministry who, in 1835, selected this very battle-field for attacking Sir Robert Peel, and overthrew him.

It is true that, after the victory was won, they forgot the object of the battle, with which Mr. Dillwyn rightly reproached them. Be that as it may, the fact remains that the question is not a new one; that men of enlightened minds and upright dispositions have, for a long time past, protested against the violence offered to the religious faith of the Irish; and that, for a long time past, there has been unanimity in the Liberal camp, both as to the existence of the evil and the necessity of a remedy.

But what abuse was ever without a defender! What iniquity was ever without an apostle? It was reserved for Mr. Whiteside to show with what lustre talent may be prostituted to the service of a bad cause.

Mr. Whiteside is an Irishman, but a Protestant and a member of the Tory party. He represents in the House of Commons the University of Dublin, that stronghold of Protestantism. Having these different titles, he naturally felt himself called upon to enter the lists. He is, besides, a barrister of great experience, very clever, and never embarrassed by any cause. It is assuredly not I who would reproach him with having been O'Connell's counsel in 1843, and Smith O'Brien's in 1848; but when he is discovered, at a later period, attached to Lord Derby's Ministry, first in 1852 as Solicitor-General for Ireland, and afterwards in 1858 as Attorney-General, it may be guessed how much may fairly be expected from his suppleness of mind.

On the occasion to which I am referring, he was what he always is—ironical, sarcastic, bitter, and of an abounding and aggressive eloquence. But what did he prove? NOTHING.

As his sole reply to arguments based upon figures, he related the following anecdote:—A country gentleman one day asked a friend, "What is Dr. Cooke Taylor?" "He is statistician to the Castle," replied the other. "And what is a statistician?" "A man who is paid for inventing facts for the use of the Whigs." As you may imagine, that made the House of Commons laugh heartily, especially the Tories; but that does not prove that the number of Protestants has increased in Ireland, since it was resolved to act unjustly there as a means of propagating Protestantism.

That the establishment in Ireland of a State religion opposed to the belief of the immense majority of the people was the work

of Elizabeth's advisers, Burleigh, Bacon, and Cecil, all men of eminent merit, is not disputed by any one; but that is a poor argument, which Burleigh, Bacon, and Cecil would be the foremost to refute were they now alive. At the period to which Mr. Walpole alluded, Protestantism was not aggressive—it stood upon the defensive. It was menaced by Sixte-Quint from Rome, by Philip from Madrid. It was the time of Popish conspiracies —it was the time of the Armada. Was England to submit to becoming only a fief of the Holy See? Was she to allow herself to be conquered? That was the point at issue. Not satisfied with excommunicating the Queen, the Pope caused the Bull of Excommunication to be posted upon the walls of the Queen's palace. Protestantism, seized by the throat, had no choice of weapons. Elizabeth's advisers were under the hard pressure of a situation which they had not created. They were resolved to tear Ireland from the Papacy at any cost; and if they erred, there were reasons for it which do not exist at the present day.

Facts, besides, speak for themselves. Scotland, towards whom England has acted with justice, is united with the English cordially and without reservation. Ireland, on the contrary, repels them as much as she fears them, and shudders beneath their chain. As for the progress of Protestantism in Ireland, where is it? It is literally true that it is the ministers of the Established Church who are doing in Ireland the work of the Papacy. I say, the Established Church; for those who do gain ground are the dissenters, because they do not destroy, by any privilege, the effect of their propaganda, but represent the action of Protestantism abandoned to its own resources.

The debate upon this interesting question has not yet terminated. It will shortly be resumed, and I am confident that it will succeed in showing that Protestantism cannot, without folly, ally itself with injustice.

Neither can it, without denying its principles, place fetters on the spirit of free inquiry. A compact to which, do what it will, it is gloriously subjected, subordinates its existence to the triumph of liberty.

LETTER CLVIII.

EFFECT PRODUCED IN ENGLAND BY THE NEWS OF THE DEATH OF STONEWALL JACKSON.

May 27th, 1863.

The partisans of the South are in mourning—Stonewall Jackson is dead.

Had he been an Englishman—had he fought for the cause and under the banner of England—his loss could not have been more keenly felt than it is by the governing classes, so passionately have they espoused the quarrel of the planters!

It is certain that the death of such a man is more in favour of the Federals than the winning a battle. Valiant without temerity, daring with intelligence, his glory among the Confederate generals shone with singular splendour.

Lee has displayed the more solid qualities of a Commander-in-Chief—quick accuracy of a glance, the art of strategic combinations, the science of temporising; but the qualities of a Fabius Cunctator are not those which kindle the flame of military enthusiasm in the heart of the soldier, and carry away fame.

Johnstone and Hills are good officers, but they have done nothing yet to mark them a place among the great captains.

Beauregard, an excellent engineer, has committed, as a general, errors fatal to his party.

Bragg has had no opportunity to reveal himself, and it is, therefore, too soon to appreciate him.

In reality, Lee seems to be the only leader who can henceforth be opposed with advantage to the Northern generals—to McLellan, should he be brought back upon the stage—to Burnside, whose name is linked with the memory of a defeat, but the defeat of a hero—to Rosecrans, who has never been vanquished—to Hooker, in whom the late events of the war, to wit, the passage of the Rappahannock, the battle of Chancellorsville, and the manner in which he effected his retreat, after movements which narrowly failed to annihilate the enemy, point out, whatever the English press may say, a captain of the first order.

Stonewall Jackson, who excelled in handling a division, has

never been called to the command of an army. It may be that President Jefferson Davis did not judge him equal to manœuvring large masses of men. It may be that he distrusted his own powers in this respect. After all, what matters? His force was in the prestige of his name, in the unbounded confidence and almost filial affection with which he inspired his soldiers, in the dash he impressed upon them. Beneath his orders the troops were capable not only of fighting better but of enduring harder privations, and supporting without a murmur longer marches. Again, his piety, which was fervent, conferred, in the eyes of his own men, a sort of religious consecration upon the unjust cause which he defended. A man of very simple manners, very careless about his person, a bad horseman, and with a countenance which was rather that of a worthy farmer than of a hero, his external appearance, far from detracting from the influence of his moral qualities, placed him in relief by stamping him with a character of attractive originality. Under certain relations his was a nature cast in the mould of Cromwell. In him, as in Cromwell, there was the rude partisan, the devotee, the warrior, the Puritan. Like Cromwell, he passed the whole night in prayer, on the eve of a battle, which served not a little to strengthen his influence over men whom a false education and perverse habits of thought have led to unite with the reverence they pay to the Bible the interest they have in maintaining slavery. For, strange to say, the Bible has no more sincere worshippers in America than the owners of human flesh, who offer to the Deity the outrage of placing that impious property under His protection.

For all these reasons the South has suffered in Stonewall Jackson an irreparable loss, and it is natural that they who, in England, sigh for the triumph of the South, should morally go into mourning.

LETTER CLIX.

DEBATE UPON THE ACT OF UNIFORMITY.

May 28th, 1863.

While the House of Commons was engaged about the Protestant Church of Ireland, Lord Ebury, in the House of Lords, was insisting upon the necessity of giving a little air and daylight to the consciences of the clergy.

At the present day very severe are the ordeals to which, in England, is subjected the orthodoxy of whosoever aspires to the honours of ordination and to those of the sacred ministry.

He must, first of all, take the oath of allegiance and supremacy. He must next declare that the Prayer Book contains nothing contrary to the Word of God. He must then acknowledge that of the thirty-nine articles which constitute Protestant orthodoxy, there is not one which is not in conformity with the Word of God. That done, he may become a Master of Arts.

To become a deacon, he must repeat his oaths and declarations.

Nor can he be made a priest without having passed through a similar ordeal.

And even this does not suffice when the time arrives for him to obtain a living, or to pass from one living to another; for, in both these cases, he is bound to declare in addition, 1st, that he pledges himself to conform to the liturgy of the Church of England; 2nd, that he assents, without any sort of reservation, to every one of the things written and prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer.

Add to that the oath of canonical obedience, *plus* the oath against simony, *plus* the obligation to reply to a multitude of inquisitorial questions, and you will still have only one half of the meshes of the net thrown by the Church of England over the consciences of its ministers.

But of the various engagements exacted, the most oppressive is that which requires an absolute assent to all that the Book of Common Prayer contains.

Everyone knows in what spirit and under the pressure of what circumstances was decreed that famous Act of Uniformity, which, under

pretext of introducing peace and unity into the Church of England, placed such a sharpened sword in the hands of intolerance.

After the execution of Archbishop Laud, in 1644, and that of Charles I. five years later, the cause of the episcopacy seemed lost. Parliament having abolished not only episcopacy, but all that did not harmonize with the model furnished by the Church of Geneva, Presbyterianism became the dominant religion, and constituted, under the Protectorate of Cromwell, the Established Church. But under its shadow there flourished many other sects—that of the Quakers, that of the Baptists, and, above all, that of the Independents, or Brownists, who were opposed to the union of the Church with the State. This last had the sympathies of Cromwell, and was the one that prevailed in the army. In reality, nothing was proscribed at that period but episcopacy, which was utterly abolished. From being the persecuted, the nonconformists changed into persecutors.

The Restoration of 1660, in replacing Charles II. upon the throne of his ancestors, naturally brought back vengeance among its baggage, and the Episcopal Church was no sooner re-established than it began to smite her enemies with the same fury that they in their days of triumph had manifested against herself. So far back as the accession of Elizabeth an Act of Uniformity had been fulminated against the nonconformists, which prohibited, under the severest penalties, the celebration of any other form of worship than that which was prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer. Under Charles II., in 1662, this old arsenal of ecclesiastical persecutions was reopened, and the Act of Uniformity again brought to light.

Nevertheless, the bill, as passed by the House of Commons, did not impose the obligation to subscribe to all that the Book of Common Prayer contains. It was Sheldon and his friends who, in the House of Lords, contrived artfully to insert that clause, with the view to take from the dissenters every possible outlet. This is the clause the erasure of which was demanded by Lord Ebury at last Tuesday's sitting.

The Book of Common Prayer contains, in fact, things which, taken literally, are of a nature to make every honest mind, every unwarped conscience, rebel. What truly pious soul can address the Divinity in such terms as these: "O Lord God, Thou to whom vengeance belongeth"? What intelligence of a high order can have anything in common with such anathemas as these:

"O daughter of Babylon, blessed be he who shall take thy children and dash them against the stones"?

Lord Ebury had, therefore, no difficulty in proving that many persons, on reaching the threshold of the Church, recoil in alarm on hearing the cry of their conscience, and that the well-known fact of the lessening number of the persons disposed to devote themselves to the ministry of the Church, is principally due to this cause.

It would be a waste of time to pause before the arguments which the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Oxford opposed to Lord Ebury's proposition. Such arguments fall of themselves. Their purport was that the clause in question is, at the present day, not generally understood in its strict and literal sense—in its primitive sense. O casuists! What! A declaration, the daughter of the spirit of tyranny, must be maintained, because it tells people one thing while they are thinking of another! Such reasoning, I repeat, is not worth a moment's notice. But it is noteworthy, as a striking indication of the progress of ideas, that Lord Ebury's motion was received with unexpected favour in a House whose religious sensitiveness has always been excessive. Not that the motion was carried—that was more than could be expected from the House of Lords—but the second reading of the bill was supported by 50 votes against 90, which is a great result. And it must especially be remarked that in the foremost rank of Lord Ebury's auxiliaries was the Bishop of London, who branded the clause under discussion as a remnant of "the vile spirit of persecution."

Lord Lyttelton, in replying to the Bishop of London, uttered the following words, which are so far important that they furnish the key to the vote of the majority, and testify to the Protestant paternity of free inquiry: "It is not at a moment when so many members of the clergy pretend to adhere to the Church, at the same time that they profess opinions which differ from her teaching—it is not at such a moment that the proposed modification can with wisdom be adopted."

While expressing himself in this manner, Lord Lyttelton was probably thinking of Bishop Colenso.

LETTER CLX.

BISHOP COLENSO.

May 28th, 1863.

Bishop Colenso! I must really beg pardon of your readers for having so long omitted to speak to them of a man who is an event. Some months ago there appeared a book by him, which book, read everywhere, everywhere devoured, furiously assailed by some, passionately defended by others, the point from which have radiated thousands of letters and pamphlets, object of endless commentaries, food for inexhaustible polemics, the terror of bigots, the despair of the high dignitaries of the Established Church, the joy of free-thinkers, still shakes religious England as on the day of its publication. Not later than yesterday I read on an enormous placard, posted almost over my door, "Dr. Colenso is wrong; Moses is right."

A strange history, sometimes, is that of a book. Dr. Colenso, nominated Bishop of Natal, in Africa, had in that capacity, to convert the natives of the country, and it was in explaining the Bible to one of them, and in attempting to reply to the naïve objections that were made—in a manner that would leave him in peace with his conscience—that he was led, first of all, into questioning, and, after a time, to resolutely denying the historical value of the Pentateuch.

One day, while he was occupied in translating the Bible for the use of his flock, a native of the country, a man of quick intelligence and simple heart, who was helping him in this task, stopped him abruptly when they arrived at this passage: "If a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished: Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his money." "What," exclaimed the poor African, with a troubled voice, "that God whom you wish me to adore, that God who, you say, is infinitely good, that merciful Father of the human race, considers as base metal a being created in His own image, and declares the master, transformed into a murderer, to be punishable only if his victim perishes under his blows!" Disgusted in his turn, the Bishop stammered out the best answer he could find.

In proportion as the translation advanced, the objections of the disciple went on multiplying, and the pastor's anguish waxed greater and greater. He therefore set himself to studying what, until then, he had never read with the eyes of his intelligence. He examined, he compared, he left nothing until it was weighed and fathomed: a linguist, he collated texts; a geologist, he found in the biblical narrative a number of facts which contradicted geology, or were contradicted by it; a mathematician, he came into collision with chimerical dimensions, contradictory proportions, impossible figures. At last he was brought to this conclusion, that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch. And, on his return to England, he, a Bishop of the Established Church, had the courage to publish a book in which he represented Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy as a tissue of gross errors.

Colenso is assuredly not the first woodman who, axe in hand, has entered the forest of faith. Voltaire, the guests of Baron d'Holbach, the German critics, had struck far deadlier blows at the Bible. But the Bible assailed in England by a Protestant Bishop recalled to mind the audacity of Luther in excommunicating the Pope. The scandal was immense. The Unitarians, who border so closely upon rationalism, and plume themselves upon it, were astonished by a daring of which they themselves would never have been capable. The authors of *Essays and Reviews* were left behind. What they only timidly suggested, with all sorts of evasions and reservations, the Bishop of Natal proclaimed with a loud and steady voice, without hesitation, without any circumlocution. Never has a churchman of our days displayed such a manly courage. And the fact was especially worthy of remark in a country like England, where nobody, in religious matters, cares to appear what he is, and where there is no lack of learned men who, having their hand full of truths, tremble to open it.

There was nothing, however, in Bishop Colenso's conduct which at all savoured of defiance. He did not step upon the stage in the character of a sceptic, with an ironical smile upon his lips. Far from that. The tone of his book is that of profound and sincere piety. He has never ceased to feel in the Bible the breath of the spirit of God. He has said so himself, and it is for that very reason he is anxious to purge it of the errors which human fallibility has mixed up with it. He entreats the Church not to expose the moral truths of the Scrip-

tures to the attacks of sceptics, by obstinately defending what is not defensible, and by arraying science against her. In a word, he thinks and wishes to serve the interests of the Church by serving the interests of truth. To those who accuse him of heresy, he replies: "It is I who am orthodox." To those who call upon him to separate himself from the Church, whose opinions, upon the points examined in his book, are so different from his own, he answers: "I was consecrated Bishop to preach truth, not error. I am a Bishop. A Bishop I will remain."

Who shall depose him? The case of an heretical bishop, it seems, had not been foreseen. The Church, of which he is one of the high dignitaries, is there before him, inwardly raging and disarmed.

All that last Wednesday's synod has judged within its power to do, is to declare in a general way "that the book entitled *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua critically examined* is of a very dangerous nature, and subversive of the belief that the Bible is the Word of God." Again, this very vague decision has not been supported either by the Bishop of London, who opposed it on the Tuesday, or by the Bishop of St. Davids, who, on Wednesday, voted against a sentence which, according to him, ought to state its reasons.

Thus the building threatens to sink down, undermined, as it is, by those who dwell in it.

It belongs to the character of the English to stop, in everything, at the half way. In no other country on the earth is so much time taken up in going from premiss to conclusion. It is this that explains the extreme slowness with which the logical bearing of the Reformation has been developed in this country. Principles, however, have an irresistible force of expansion. It was all very fine for the Reformation to affirm the infallibility of the Scriptures. Unwittingly and unwillingly it rendered them liable to the Court of Free Inquiry on the day when, refusing to Rome the privilege of interpreting the divine word, it placed before the kneeling people a Bible translated and the Gospel open.

When Calvin, surpassing the inconsistencies of Luther, made himself the Ignatius de Loyola of the Reformation; when he created himself, by a monstrous presumption, the despotic legislator of free inquiry; when, to reconcile such a despotism with the recognised right of every individual to follow no other

guide than the grace received from on high, he supposed the elect to be all capable of understanding *in the same manner* the Holy Word, and called their assembly the true Church in opposition to Rome, striving thereby to recover in the liberty of consciences the unity that was lost; when, after writing in his "Christian Constitution;" *Politicæ usus non minor inter homines quam panis, aquæ, solis, et aëris*, he raised with a triumphant air to Heaven his hands red with the blood of Savet, and aimed at making Luther's revolt terminate in the establishment of a sort of protestant papacy—what did Calvin attempt but the impossible? The true cry of the Reformation had been uttered before Luther by the Waldenses. It was this: "All Christians are priests"—the theological formula of that principle whence issued the French Revolution: "All men are equal."

LETTER CLXI.

BLUNDERS AND INCONSISTENCIES OF ENGLISH POLICY WITH REGARD TO RUSSIA.

May 31st, 1863.

I.

A FEW days since, the Palmerston-Russell Ministry was interrogated on the subject of Circassia, and of an international offence recently committed by Russia in those remote regions.

By way of reply Lord Palmerston, in an absent sort of manner, uttered two or three sentences, the meaning of which was that it was an affair of ancient history, and that it was not worth noticing—and the matter was passed over.

Is it not enough to confound one's mind?

For very nearly the last forty years the forces of Russia have been hurled against the Caucasus. For very nearly forty years the Circassians, a race of heroes, have sustained against the Russians a struggle which recals the immortal resistance opposed to the Persians by the Greeks in the olden time. To subdue a people over whom, two thousand years ago, Mithridates the Great himself was unable to establish more than a fleeting authority, and who, since that time, have never bowed before any conqueror,

never bent before a master, Russia is exhausting herself in prodigious efforts. Russia, who in 1828 invaded Turkey with only 68,000 men—who, at the time of the Crimean war, employed no more than 80,000 men against the armed coalition of France, England, Turkey, and Piedmont—who, at this very moment, does not appear to have more than seventy or eighty thousand men to give to Count de Berg to crush Poland—Russia has sent forth against the Caucasus armies of 100,000, of 140,000, of 200,000 men. A terrible warfare is that which has been waged for very nearly half a century between the Black Sea and the Caspian. Its object, indeed, is immense. Russia's fierce resolution to place her foot upon her prey sufficiently proves it. What the possession of Constantinople would be to her as concerns Europe, the possession of the Caucasus would be as concerns Asia. Let Russia reign at once over the city of the Sultans and over the Caucasus; let her, by the conquest of the Dardanelles, get possession of the keys of the Mediterranean, and, by the conquest of the Caucasus, lay the foundation of her sway over Persia, open to herself the Indian Ocean, and place herself in a position successfully to dispute India with the English—all is over, the world is hers, the dream of Peter the Great is realised.

And yet a profound silence covers this march of Russia towards universal empire. The stormy question that is being fought out on the confines of Europe and Asia, is food disdained by newspaper gossip. It is not long since that the Grand Duke Michael almost fell into the hands of the mountaineers of the Caucasus, and escaped only by a miracle. There is a journal, however, of European importance, in whose columns the danger incurred by the brother of the Czar has not even figured under the head of Various Intelligence. About eight months ago two chiefs sent by the Circassians, Hadji-Hayden-Hassan and Kusta-Ogli-Ismaël, came to England to ask this country not to resign her right to trade with an independent people. That visit, however, was not judged worthy of a place in the broad sheet of the *Times* between the report of Lord So-and-So's health and the story of a husband accused of having beaten his wife. What is the meaning of this? By what mysterious influence is England induced to pay such little attention to what interests her so deeply? In virtue of what compact with fame has Russia succeeded in concealing from the English people the knowledge

of events to which it cannot remain indifferent without folly, and which it cannot ignore without peril?

The pretensions of Russia to Circassia and the Caucasus are a part of a vast system of encroachments, the gradual development of which demonstrates, to an almost incredible extent, the apathy or diplomatic incapacity of the Statesmen of England.

On the 28th February, 1848, the following passage from a letter written by Lord Ponsonby, was read in the House of Commons:—

"I had been led to believe that you had changed your opinion relative to Circassia. No, I did not believe it—I heard it said; that was all. I am charmed with the manner in which you treated this subject. It is admirable. I hope that you approved of the purport of my despatches in what concerns this question. The possession of the Caucasus has appeared to me from the first of an importance inferior only to that of the possession of Constantinople; but it is only quite recently that I have become acquainted with facts which establish the absolute independence of that country, and, consequently, the flagrant illegality of the title which Nicholas pretends to have to possess it. If there existed in England a man who was worth a straw this affair would soon be settled; but our statesmen, great and small, are only pedlers, who have not even the kind of sagacity of which the Israelite gives proof in selling his wares to housemaids and scullions."

No doubt that is a singularly exaggerated estimate, which it would be absurd to adopt literally. But when we run over, link by link, the chain of blunders which since 1821, England has committed in her diplomatic relations with Russia, when we behold the English Government:

With its own hands opening the door for the intervention of the Russians in Turkey by the protocol of the 4th April, 1826;

Then, giving to this protocol the authority of a treaty;

Then, helping Russia to annihilate the Turkish fleet at Navarino;

Then, allowing itself to be deceived, in the beginning of 1828, by the declaration that, in invading the Turkish provinces, the Russians had no designs of conquest;

Then, subscribing in 1829 to the acquisitions stipulated by the peace of Adrianople, without reminding or wishing to remind Russia that no acquisition of territory was permitted to her by

the terms of the protocol of the 4th April, 1826, become the treaty of the 6th July, 1827;

Then, allowing her to become mistress of the navigation of the Danube, in contempt of Article 109 of the Treaty of Vienna, which declares free the navigation of all rivers from the point where each becomes navigable to its mouth;

Then, lastly, acknowledging, or at all events abstaining from disputing, her right to violate Articles XI., XII., and XIII. of the Treaty of Paris, 1856, by monopolising the Black Sea, by seizing and confiscating every vessel that attempts to trade with Circassia. . . . .

When all that is taken into consideration, it is easy to understand the bitterness of Lord Ponsonby's outpourings at a time when he was so well placed to measure the full range of a tolerance sprung from the blindness of ignorance or of fear.

II.

To appreciate the chances Poland possesses of being efficaciously and energetically succoured by England, it is of consequence to study the spirit and resources of English diplomacy in the particular relations of England and Russia during the last forty years.

The palpable incapacity of this diplomacy, its flagrant inferiority, its timid efforts, invariably terminating in disastrous concessions, form, when contrasted with the uninterrupted series of the diplomatic triumphs of Russia, one of the most curious and instructive spectacles of contemporary history.

At this moment, and notwithstanding the solemn declarations of Earl Russell, the present Cabinet is vehemently accused by the Tories of entertaining thoughts of war. According to the *Morning Herald*, Lord Palmerston, at the close of his days, is dreaming of the tempestuous glory of combats; Earl Russell is goading on the country, with the spur to its side; the Whig Ministers are disposed to add to the long catalogue of their crimes that of wishing to have recourse to the arbitrament of the sword, against Russia and in favour of Poland; Englishmen, in short, are holding the torch that is to kindle a conflagration in which England runs some risk of being utterly consumed.

Pray, do not take this up too seriously. What the Tories want, at the present moment, is a battlefield and a cry. They

impute to the Ministry warlike intentions at which they would be the first not to take alarm—and that for want of any other theme for blame; nothing more.

To pretend that the insurrection of Poland, if prolonged, will not bring about complications to which England would be forced to submit, whether she liked it or not, is more than I can venture to do. But it is quite certain that the Government, so far from having a craving for war, dreads war, and would do so even could it rely upon the co-operation of imperial France, whose active alliance it fears almost as much as her enmity.

As for its sentiments with regard to Russia, they are mastered to an incredible extent by the fear of offending her.

And this apprehension is not of yesterday.

I had occasion lately to draw your attention to the singularly pacific speech delivered by Earl Russell touching the affairs of Poland. Well—setting aside the great episode of the Crimean war, in which France played a part—for at least forty years past the attitude of official England towards Russia has been what that speech attests, without taking into account that she seems never to have had a very clear idea of her own danger, and has exhibited a singular indecision in her movements.

To that, in some degree, must be attributed the fabulous progress of what has so justly been named the Northern Colossus. The census of the inhabitants of the empire, which, between the accession of Peter I. in 1689 to the death of Alexander I. in 1825, rose from fifteen to fifty-eight millions, at the present day, according to the most moderate calculations, exceeds seventy millions.

And, of all the European Powers, which is the one that runs the greatest danger from the enormous aggrandisement of Russia? Is it not England? Lord Chatham remarked, with reference to Catherine's views as to Turkey, "With a man who does not understand of what importance to Great Britain is the smallest Turkish village, I cannot condescend to a discussion."

Let us now follow, stage by stage, Russia's conquering march across history from the time of Peter I.

In 1699 she caused Azof to be ceded to her by the peace of Carlowitz, and so planted her foot upon the Black Sea.

In 1770 her fleet appeared for the first time in the Mediterranean, and destroyed the Turkish fleet at Tchesmé.

In 1773 she crossed the Danube for the first time.

In 1774 the Treaty of Kainardji gave her the country com-

prised between the Dnieper and the Bug, opened out to her the Black Sea, and secured, to her advantage, the independence of the Crimean and Kouban Tartars.

In 1783 she incorporated in her empire Crimean Tartary.

In 1792 she received the Dniester as the frontier line between herself and Turkey.

In 1812 the peace of Bucharest extended her sway to the Pruth.

In 1827 England, strange to say, helped her to annihilate the Turkish fleet at Navarino.

In 1829 she crushed the Turks at Shumla, crossed the Balkan, took Adrianople, pushed her light cavalry to the very suburbs of Stamboul, and extorted from the Turks that famous Treaty of Adrianople which delivered to her the important fortress of Anapa, at the mouth of the Kouban, established her upon the Danube, subjected Moldavia and Wallachia to her influence, and, by the recognition of an independent Greece, dismembered the Ottoman empire.

Finally, in 1833, in return for the interested aid offered by her to the Sultan against the Pasha of Egypt, she caused to be inserted in a secret clause of the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi that the Dardanelles, open to Russia alone, should be closed against the other European Powers.

But the Crimean war?

The Crimean war would certainly have dealt a terrible blow to the influence of Russia in the East had not England permitted the power of the Russians there to survive their reverses. It was England that permitted this. What have the English gained—what have the Turks profited—by that war in which both the one and the other lavished so much blood and money? So far as the liberty of the Black Sea is concerned, the Treaty of Paris, of March, 1856, is a scrap of paper, and nothing more. All in vain did Article XI. of that Treaty declare "the waters and ports of the Black Sea open to the mercantile marine of all nations." All in vain did Article XIII. interdict the establishment or maintenance, on the shores of the Black Sea, of any military or naval arsenal. Seven years have glided past since the conclusion of the Treaty of Paris, and what is doing at this day in those regions? All the coasts of Circassia are watched by a Russian ship of war. On every point of the coast which is not commanded by a ship of war, Russia has constructed a fort. No trade is possible with any of the Circassian ports. And woe to

the inhabitants of the country who dare to encounter that great peril of taking to the sea! Hereafter will be shown to what fate they expose themselves.

Yes; Russia, since the Crimean war, is on the point of again becoming in the East what she was before that war. She was for an instant brought to a halt in her triumphant march—but has she lost ground? No.

What cause is there for astonishment? The policy of England with regard to Russia has always been—I say it again—uncertain, vacillating, contradictory, and consequently incapable of making head against that persistent spirit so deeply marked in all the acts of Russian diplomacy.

Up to the time of the Greek insurrection, for instance, if any one idea had sway in the traditions of the Foreign Office it was the necessity of maintaining the Ottoman empire, the existence of which was regarded by English statesmen as closely bound up with the establishment of English rule in India.

In 1821 English diplomacy appeared all at once to wear a new aspect. It suffered itself to be penetrated by a kind of romantic and literary sympathy, excited, in their heroic struggle against the Crescent, by the descendants of Themistocles, Miltiades, and Leonidas. In the protocol of the 4th of April, 1826, Canning made himself the tool of Russia against the Turks. The battle of Navarino took place. The invasion of Turkey by the Russians in 1828 was publicly supported by Lord Palmerston, who was not at that time a member of the Ministry. Lord Aberdeen, who was Secretary for Foreign Affairs in 1829, made no secret of his Russian tendencies, which nevertheless seemed too lukewarm to many persons, so rapid was the current—and that state of things lasted till 1833.

At that date there was a return to the old system. It had become necessary to uphold the Ottoman Empire at any price. It had become necessary to bar against the Russians the road to India, the road to universal domination. The Crimean war, so far as it regards England, was the result of that movement.

At the present day we are on the eve of beholding another change again imparted to her policy. The day before yesterday a debate ensued in the House of Commons upon the Eastern question, when Messrs. Gregory, Cochrane, Maguire, and Cobden were heard loudly to declare that the English policy of 1863 ought not to be that of 1854—that the Turkish Government was

a tyrannical government, unworthy of the sympathies of a free people—that it kept beneath its yoke a numerous Christian population, whose deliverance England was bound to desire—that the regeneration of the Turkish Empire was purely chimerical—that the pretended reforms operated by the Sultan were illusory—that the fall of an empire which has so long been threatening ruin was inevitable—that it was necessary to take a decided course, and leave to perish that which had lost the power to live. Messrs. Layard and Gladstone replied, in the name of the Ministry, but feebly; and while I am writing these lines my eyes fall upon an article of the *Times* adopting without reserve the denunciations and bitter conclusions against the Turks.

III.

Behold us, then, already far off from the Crimean war, and the popularity it gave to the Turks in England!

When in 1853 Omar Pasha was victoriously holding the Danube against the Russians, and when, in 1854, Paskiewitch retired from before the walls of Silistria, humiliated and trembling with shame, who would ever have said that England, then so prompt to exalt the prowess of Turkey and to behold in it a pledge of her regeneration, would so soon learn to feel against her the sentiments which were brought to light in the debate of the 29th May? What has become of the time when Lord Shaftesbury, in that respect the mouthpiece of popular enthusiasm, declared, before the House of Lords, that of all the friends of Christianity the Sultan was the best?

Strange, well nigh inexplicable circumstance! At the very moment that England is taking in hand against Russia the cause of insurgent Poland she morally declares war against Turkey, in whom Russia finds her most inveterate enemy, and the Poles their most faithful friend!

Whence proceeds this reaction, the suddenness of which seems so very mysterious?

I use the word "reaction," and it is not at all too strong. What, indeed, can be more menacing for the Ottoman Empire than that memorable debate of the 29th May, when the English House of Commons, all at once forsaking the policy of yesterday, rings beforehand the funeral knell of the "sick man" of Constantinople, and declares his succession open?

It is a striking circumstance that Mr. Gregory, who set fire to the train, had no precise question to put; and did not put any. His motion, which was withdrawn, was not a motion. Its object was neither to challenge a vote, nor to lead up to one. It consisted in asking Government to publish, relative to Turkey, certain documents which the mover of the motion did not even take the trouble to specify. This was evidently only a pretext to lead the House of Commons to declare its sentiments, and solemnly divulge the programme of its new policy to Turkey, to Russia, to Europe.

As a manifestation, the debate was certainly as clear, as complete, as decisive as possible.

With the exception of the official speakers, that is, of Mr. Layard, who was listened to with a show of some impatience, and of Mr. Gladstone, who exhibited extreme reserve in defending Turkey, all who took part in the debate did so in a manner to throw St. Petersburg into transports of joy, and Constantinople into consternation.

And in order that nothing might be wanting to the importance of this manifestation, men of every shade of opinion gave each other the hand in this great crusade against the Porte. One might really have thought that the different parties which divide England had agreed on this occasion to strike their blow simultaneously. Mr. Gregory is a Conservative with Liberal tendencies. Mr. Baillie Cochrane is a pure Conservative, one of those cosmopolitan Conservatives who go so far as to wish the Bourbons back to Naples. Mr. Maguire, an Irishman, represents the alliance of radicalism with popery. Mr. Grant Duff may be considered as the organ of the men who are impelled towards radicalism by philanthropy. Mr. Seymour is a Liberal. As for Mr. Cobden, every one knows that in him the mercantile class has its best accredited representative. Well, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Baillie Cochrane, Mr. Maguire, Mr. Grant Duff, Mr. Seymour, and Mr. Cobden, as with one voice, attacked the Porte, denounced the imbecility of its government, and the corruption of its functionaries, branded what they called its tyranny, insulted what they believed to be its last agony, and promised its spoils to the Christian populations.

Of the Ministers, the one who, rightly or wrongly, is supposed to be the most favourable to the Turks, is the Head of the Cabinet, and he was absent, as if Lord Palmerston were afraid that for very

shame's sake, he would have to defend a cause that was irretrievably lost.

What more need be said? This attack came off unexpectedly, without provocation, without apparent motive, without any appreciable necessity, without it being possible to know exactly for what reason, or for what purpose.

In order to explain this singular phase of opinion will anyone assert that it took its rise in a lofty sentiment of equity?

That the Turks have never been more than encamped in Europe;

That their rule, offspring of conquest, has always retained traces of its origin;

That their yoke, imposed upon populations of a different race and religion, simply attests the superiority of brute force, and therefore deserves to be broken asunder in the name of justice;

That the Turks do not constitute Turkey;

That the independence of the country occupied by them is, of a truth, of a first interest for Europe in general, and for England in particular, but that this independence must not be confounded with the maintenance of an aristocratic caste who, after having imported barbarism into Europe, seek to perpetuate its existence by oppression;

That it does not become Christian nations to sanction the subjection of a majority composed of worshippers of Christ, to a minority composed of the followers of Mahomet;

That it is the independence of the Cross, not that of the Crescent, which is to be protected against the Russians on the Bosphorus;

In a word, that the city to be saved is Byzantium, not Stamboul!

These would certainly be plausible, nay, honourable motives if, on the one hand, it was the practice of English policy to suffer itself to be directed by sentimental considerations, and if, on the other hand, justice only dated from yesterday.

What! it was not until the 29th of May, 1863, that people in England noticed the subjection in which the Christian populations are living in Turkey! Of what, then, was Sir Henry Bulwer thinking, when he arrested the already lifted arms of the Bulgarians; or Earl Russell, when he reproached Prince Michael with having too keenly resented the insult of the bombardment of Belgrade; or Lord Palmerston, when he sent a fleet to the

Piræus, in the fear that the Hellenes of Thessaly might recall to mind their origin? I say nothing of the Crimean war, in which England expended so much blood and money to preserve from a mortal shock that existence of the Turk which is now so furiously assailed in the House of Commons, with the applause of the *Times* and the *Daily News*, surprised to find themselves of one way of thinking.

It is worthy of remark that the greater part of the acts of malversation, corruption, and tyranny which served to swell out Mr. Gregory's charges, belong precisely to the period when the English were all on fire for the Ottoman Empire. Had a sitting similar to that of the 29th May of this year taken place in 1860, on the morrow of the massacres of Hasbeya, Zuhleh, Deir-el-Kamar, and Damascus, or even immediately after the 15th June, 1862, at the date of that bombardment of Belgrade against which the Consuls of the different nations protested with so much reason and force —the thing would be less difficult to understand. But how are we to account for the fact that the moment selected for trampling upon the Turkish Government is when it is making manifest and successful efforts to recover its strength, to regenerate itself, and attract to itself the populations subject to its authority? Barely a few months ago there was only one voice in England to admit that the situation of Turkey had wonderfully improved since the accession of the brother of Abdul-Medjid to the throne of Othman. The administration reconstructed, the depredations of the pashas repressed, a new impulse given to the navy, the Ottoman army placed in a condition to rival, so far as regards equipment and drill, the best troops in Europe; manufactures reviving, the cultivation of cotton encouraged, order gradually restored to the finances, the financial credit of the Turk raised in foreign countries—such was the series of progress people loved to point out. Abdul Aziz, it was said, was a prince who would take his place among reformers, and the title of a great minister was freely accorded to Fuad Pasha. Only yesterday Lord Hobart addressed to the British Cabinet an official report, in which it is shown that the Ottoman Government, which at the commencement of 1862 had a floating debt of twenty millions sterling to liquidate, had now, thanks to financial operations conducted in the same spirit in which they were conceived, withdrawn from circulation, either in Caïmés or in Treasury Bonds, the sum of £14,664,433—a prodigious result when one recollects what was the state of Turkey

at the time of Abdul Medjid's death. And at such a moment as this England suddenly appears disposed to change the foundation of her Eastern policy!

But what reason is there for astonishment? As I said in my last letter, for many years past this policy, as regards the Eastern Question and Russia, has been nothing else than a series of oscillations and contradictions, as can be proved by a rapid glance at the diplomatic history of the Foreign Office in its relations with the statesmen of St. Petersburg.

IV.

England keeping watch for long years over the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire with an anxious solicitude at times too easily lulled to sleep, but quickly aroused to vigilance—redeeming the great inconsistency of Navarino by the Crimean war—giving and receiving terrible blows to assure the *integrity* of the Power encamped upon the Bosphorus—helping the Turks to crush the Montenegrins—stopping the Servians in their march towards absolute independence—rebuking their rebellious prince by the voice of Earl Russell—defending the authority of the Sultan against the Bulgarians—for the benefit of the same authority, opposing the ascendancy of the Russians over the Danubian Provinces—then, one fine morning, remembering with a pang that there are in Turkey populations that are not Turkish—that the genius of the Koran hovers over the country between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and that it is not the Cross which gleams over the dome of St. Sophia's—this is a phenomenon so curious that one naturally feels a keen desire to understand its causes.

These causes must not be looked for in a sentimental fascination—in the first place, because English policy is not accustomed to obey impulses of that kind; and secondly, because justice does not take so long to speak to the heart of those who understand her language.

I have read Mr. Gregory's speech attentively, and all that I can find in it by way of explanation comes to this: "The intrigues of Russia in Greece, in Circassia, and in the Danubian Provinces, prove that she has not forsaken her policy of former times; *but* the Crimean War has destroyed all the material elements of the power of Russia."

On the other hand, the *Saturday Review*, one of the most influential papers in this country, says in so many words that the change of policy revealed by the debate of the 29th May proceeds from the success of the Crimean War—the Eastern Question having had no vital interest until Russia threatened Europe with the right hand and Asia with the left.

If England, then, at length perceives that as regards the Christian populations subject to the Turks she has duties to fulfil, it is because she believes that she is no longer interested in neglecting the accomplishment of these duties. So long as Russia seemed in a position to lay hold of Constantinople by stretching out her arm, it would have cost too dear to be just. But, thanks to the Crimean War, one can now afford oneself the luxury of justice, seeing that it can be had on moderate terms.

I will not examine in this place how far such reasoning is founded on morality; but is it even founded on good policy? And does not England indulge in very strange illusions as to the consequences of the Crimean War?

In that war Russia was vanquished, without doubt; but the East beheld her, single-handed, holding her own against four Powers leagued against her, two of whom figure in the foremost rank among the Powers of the earth. Russia was vanquished, but not till she had reduced the English to play only a secondary part to the French on the field of battle, a circumstance more likely to diminish than to augment the military prestige of Great Britain.

A great noise has been made about the fall of Sebastopol—a fortress constructed, it was said, to command the navigation of the Black Sea. The truth is, as has been shown in a remarkable pamphlet recently published here, the town of Sebastopol was never intended to serve as a basis for naval operations. During the two great wars which Russia had to sustain subsequent to the construction of Sebastopol—to wit, the war of 1828-29 against Turkey, and that of 1826-27 against Persia—not a single bag of biscuits was sent from Sebastopol. In the former of those wars, the supplies came from Odessa in English vessels freighted for that purpose; in the latter, the supply towns were Taganrog and Astrakan. The dangers incidental to the navigation of the Black Sea, and which in ancient times gained for it the name of *Axenos*, or The Inhospitable, are perfectly well known. On the eastern side the coasts are nearly inaccessible. In reality, the advantage

which Russia derives from the Black Sea, from the naval and military point of view, consists in the facility of victualling the places of strength which she possesses on the Circassian coast, and which she has wrested from the inhabitants of that country, Now, as concerns Circassia, the power of Russia subsequent to the Crimean War was exactly what it was before. To stab her in the heart, in the East, co-operation ought to have been given to the Circassians in arms. The Lesghis ought to have been enabled to hurl against Tiflis fifty thousand warriors who were only waiting for the signal; Russia ought to have been attacked where she was really vulnerable in that part of the world—that is, to the south of the Caucasus, by summoning to independence Georgia, Gouria, and Imeretia.

This is what the Circassians hoped for, and the Crimean war, in disappointing their expectations and abandoning them to themselves, could have no other effect than that of converting in their eyes Russia's defeat into a triumph. What have they gained from that war, from which they expected their deliverance? "Alas!" piteously wrote the Circassian deputies who came to London last year, "for seven years past Russia is spoken of as vanquished, and all that time we have had to defend against her our country, our liberty, our existence!"

As regards the Crimean Tartars, the result of a too much vaunted enterprise has been to again bring them under the Russian yoke.

As regards Turkey, the absolute nullity of the result may be judged from this fact, that the enemy whom the Turks had assisted in vanquishing, was not even condemned to pay the costs of the war.

So much for its consequences as concerns the power of Russia in the East. Let us now examine its consequences as concerns its power in Europe.

Up to the period of the Crimean war the great lever of the English power had been the Right of Search, understood in the sense of confiscating at sea all property belonging to the enemy. This right England had never ceased to regard as that which really placed her in possession of the trident. This right she had defended against the whole world, at the price of the most cruel sacrifices, and without shrinking from any act of violence. The maintenance of this right had been the object of constant solicitude on the part of her statesmen, and Pitt had

proclaimed as for ever ill-omened the day on which she should be forced to give it up. By the Right of Search, understood and applied as she understood and applied it, England governed the sea; by means of the sea which unites, instead of dividing, the countries which it appears to separate, England governed commerce; by means of commerce which makes the existence of peoples given to strife, to depend upon the industry of peoples given to labour, England governed the world.

And it was especially with reference to Russia that the Right of Search, left intact, constituted an incomparable force.

What, in fact, is Russia? She is described by Mr. Urquhart, with perfect accuracy, as a vast continent extending between Asia and Europe, whose waters, flowing to the south and west, enter the sea at different points with the sole result of finding themselves imprisoned in a strait. Thence arises the necessity of conveying the products of the country by a narrow route easy to guard. Let the enemy take post at the entrance, with the firm resolution to bar the passage, and all is over; commerce is brought to a dead-lock, the sources of public revenue are dried up, and Russia finds herself in the position of a man whose throat is pressed by the thumb of his adversary.

Accordingly, what happened at the time of that famous declaration of "armed neutrality," by which Russia took her post in the foremost rank? On the 14th January, 1801, the English Government laid an embargo upon all the ships belonging to each of the confederated powers; vessels armed as privateers were launched into the Baltic; in a brief space of time, nearly one half of the merchant vessels belonging to the Northern Powers and out at sea, were taken into British ports; the commerce of Russia was suddenly paralysed; the wealthy landowners, no longer finding a way to export their goods and seeing before them a yawning abyss, took fright; there was disquietude everywhere, everywhere complaints; a conspiracy was formed; Paul was strangled. Farewell to the Northern Confederation! Farewell to the gigantic expectations of Napoleon! To bring about such immense results, all that had been needed was the Right of Search energetically enforced for two months by English vessels armed as privateers.

As regards, then, the comparative forces of Russia and England, what has been the net result of the Crimean war? It is set forth in the two following articles of the Declaration of

Paris, of the 16th April, 1856: 1st. Privateering is and remains abolished; 2nd, the flag covers the merchandise, with the exception of contraband of war.

Thus for two centuries England has repelled, as if it were for her a question of life and death, the principle that the flag covers the merchandise; she has repelled it during that space of time, though it was proclaimed in 119 international agreements out of 130. And what 119 international agreements out of 130, concluded between the chief Powers of the earth, had failed to extort from England, her victories in the Crimea have wrested from her. Lord Derby had, indeed, good reason to exclaim on the 22nd May, 1856: "Whatever losses Russia may have suffered in this war, whatever embarrassments this war may have caused her, I do not hesitate to declare that these losses and these embarrassments are more than compensated by the adoption of a single clause, gratuitously inserted in the Treaty of Paris by the French and English plenipotentiaries, a clause by which, to use Pitt's expression, you have sacrificed the maritime greatness of England on the altar of Russia."

Lord Clarendon, who signed the treaty, was so sensible of this himself, that he did not think for one moment of making his consent depend upon that of the British Parliament, so certain he was that there would be only one voice, whether in the House of Commons or in the House of Lords, against such an enormous concession! And this is not merely an hypothesis! Called upon to explain his conduct on the 22nd May, 1856, in the Upper House, he did so, strangely enough, in the following words: "Do you think, then, that if the articles of the Treaty of Paris, or simply the bases upon which it rests, had been submitted to the approbation of Parliament, the Treaty would ever have been signed?"

Heaven forbid that we should regret it. For my part, if there is any one historical fact of which I feel little disposed to complain, it is that one. Diplomatists of Mr. Urquhart's turn of mind are, of course, free to put on mourning because England has lost the tyrannical power she arrogated to herself as a belligerent power over the commerce of neutrals. The ocean is the great highway of nations, and every people that interferes with the liberty of the seas commits an act of treason against humanity. But that is not the question. It is certain that civilisation in general has gained immensely by the modifications

imposed upon the theory of the Right of Search. Europe cannot do otherwise than rejoice. Only, as concerns England, especially in her relations with Russia, there is in this a germ of future weakness as manifest as it is considerable. And when we reflect that of all the consequences of the Crimean war this is the most important, it is impossible not to be struck by the blindness of those English who, like Mr. Gregory, are ready to say: "We have watched long enough. Now that the Crimean war has disposed of the power of Russia, let us go to sleep."

LETTER CLXII.

THE FRENCH EXPEDITION IN MEXICO AND THE "TIMES."

June 16th, 1863.

THE great event of the day is the capture of Puebla.

This news has been the subject of almost universal astonishment.

At the beginning people imagined, even in England, that the conquest of Mexico would be only child's-play for the victors of Solferino. Not that the English ever for an instant fell into the mistake into which the French Government was drawn by artful promises. No one, on this side of the Channel, expected to see the Mexicans welcome as liberators the invaders of their country, hold out their arms to those who pointed their swords at them, and strew with flowers the road from Vera Cruz to Mexico. These illusions, fruitful of bloodshed, England left to the partisans of General Almonte and his fellows. But for all that she imagined, at first, that the Zouaves would get to Mexico at the double, without having more to do than to step over the bodies of the Mexicans who dared to oppose them. The French army is the finest army in the world, and the English know it, nor do they much hesitate to acknowledge it. They could not therefore believe that such valiant troops would be checked, even for a moment, by bands that were supposed utterly incapable of discipline, entirely destitute of courage, and strangers to every sentiment of patriotism.

People in England know now what to think of the value of this preconceived opinion. In the English papers the siege of

Puebla has been compared to the siege of Saragossa. Quite recently the *Daily News*, in alluding to the heroic resistance of the Mexicans, recalled that which the French, under the Convention, opposed to an invasion of the same nature. "The Mexicans," said the *Morning Star* of the 12th June, "fought like patriots, like heroes," and added: "The history of this age offers nothing more surprising than the mistake into which the French Government fell touching the Mexican expedition."

Thus at last they had accustomed themselves to the idea that the siege of Puebla, which had lasted so long, might last much longer. A thousand sinister rumours, even, respecting the position of the French army, had of late been bruited abroad. There was talk of checks having been sustained, of assaults repulsed, of insufficient means of attack. It was said that the troops of General Forey were discouraged. The belief arose that success would be "an affair of time." Even to-day the news, confirmed by the guns of the Invalides and the illumination of Fontainebleau, encounters some scepticism, so true it is, that, as the *Morning Star* remarks, the fall of Puebla "takes the world by surprise." Who ever could have foreseen such a result?

Be that as it may, the fall of Puebla is an event as fortunate for us Frenchmen, as it is serious for England. France had a thorn in her flesh—it now rests only with the Imperial Government to extract that thorn. Peace can be concluded not only without dishonour, but in making such a generous use of victory as would ennoble it. Is it, then, so difficult to be just, when might is on our side? Besides, on this as on every other occasion, a just and generous policy would also be the most intelligent.

It is not in the direction of Mexico that the eyes of France care to turn, but in that of Poland. If the Second Empire wills the salvation of the nation who, under the First Empire, mingled their blood with ours on so many fields of battle, fortune and the indomitable valour of French soldiers render it master of its resolutions. Let it cut short a remote and adventurous expedition; let it again become unfettered in its movements, and the capture of Puebla will, perhaps, have marked on the dial-plate of history the hour of the deliverance of Warsaw.

It is chiefly by this link that the Mexican question is connected with the general bearing of the events which engage the attention of Europe. It is, therefore, essential that this question should be looked at in its proper light.

One of the correspondents of the *Europe*, a writer of great merit, generally speaking well informed, and with whom I am happy to be always of the same opinion, lately wrote that the English public took much interest in the progress of the French arms across the Atlantic, heartily wishing them prompt and complete success.

In the same article he accused Juarez of having, among other delinquencies, formerly caused the violation of the abode of the English Consul-general at Mexico, and of having seized upon a sum of 600,000 dollars contained in chests deposited there by certain Mining Companies.

In conclusion, he represented the differences of opinion which put an end to the combined action of England, France, and Spain in Mexico, as an excuse of which the English cabinet cleverly availed themselves for avoiding a rupture with the United States.

If, by those who in England are interested in the success of the French arms, the writer in question had intended only to refer to the holders of Mexican Bonds, he would have been perfectly right. These, indeed, do desire to see the French at Mexico as speedily as possible, because, as Mr. James L. Hart observes, they count, in that case, upon the resumption of the payments which are at present suspended—simply an affair of dividends. This desire, on their part, is very natural, and I see nothing in it to find fault with. But the holders of Mexican Bonds do not constitute the English nation. It is not in the Money Market that the thermometer is placed which one seeks to consult when anxious to become acquainted with the sympathies or antipathies of a great people. At Paris the Rentes went up when the news arrived of the disaster of Waterloo. That the holders of Mexican Bonds should not be regarded as mere speculators, and taken to task as such, may be very proper; but it is not the less true that their opinion in an affair in which they have such a strong personal interest does not pass for law, and in no degree supplies the measure of the sentiments of an entire country. If ever it was necessary to guard against concluding the whole from a part, it is so in this case.

Once success is clearly demonstrated, it is possible that, like the *Daily Telegraph* of to-day, certain individuals may think it right to applaud. Did the accomplished fact ever fail to find worshippers? But it is quite certain that up to this time there has been only one voice in England against the war waged in

Mexico after the separation of the three powers originally united. Take the English newspapers from the *Morning Post* to the *Morning Advertiser*, from the *Morning Herald* to the *Daily News* and *Morning Star*, from the *Saturday Review* to the *Economist* and *Spectator*, and you will find the most hostile, nay, the most violent comments on the nature and probable consequences of this expedition.

As for the *Times*, it would be easy to show how, availing itself of its recognised privilege of contradicting itself, it has followed with alternate prayers and anathemas the march of the French towards Mexico. But I prefer to dwell upon the eagerness with which that journal, for whom the military successes of France have been always a subject either of irritation or apprehension, has more than once bestowed its sanction upon the French expedition.

In its number of the 31st May, 1862, the *Times* said, "In Mexico France can do much good, with little chance of doing harm to anyone whomsoever, except to herself." So, because France, in Mexico, had a chance of doing harm to herself, the *Times* lavished its encouragements upon her!

In its number of the 27th May, 1862, speaking of the Mexican refugees, members of the reactionary and ecclesiastical party, opponents of the government of Juarez, and auxiliaries of the French invasion, the *Times* applied to them the epithet of ruffians. It accused Marquez and "other ruffians" of that party of having by their misdeeds brought about the intervention, and added, "If Ferdinand Maximilian goes to Mexico, he will find his most active friends among the men who have shot, tortured, and robbed, until, at last, Europe lost patience." Was it, then, that France might figure before the eyes of the world in such good company that the *Times* applauded the presence of the French in Mexico?

And now, how is it conceivable that the editor of the Money Market department of the *Times* should dare to qualify the government of Juarez as "an anarchical, immoral, plundering, tyrannical government," and reproach it "with having plunged the country into frightful confusion, with having superseded the principles of right and justice by the practice of brigandage, robbery, and murder"?

I happen to have lying before me the blue book published by the British Government with reference to the affairs of Mexico, and this is the style in which the state of things in that country

was described previous to the expedition intended to remedy it, by Mr. Matthew, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the Cabinet of St. James', at Mexico:

"The situation," wrote Mr. Matthew to Lord John Russell, "has not changed during the last two months . . . Senor Fuente, a lawyer of some reputation, quitted Mexico by the last packet-boat, with a mission for Paris and probably for Spain. One thing retarded his departure: the difficulty of procuring the small sum necessary to supply the expenses of the journey. To this extreme want of means must be attributed the prolonged existence and increase of the guerilla bands commanded by the Spaniards Cobos and Vicario, and by the infamous Marquez, who pursues his career of assassination and rapine. Two miserable attempts have been made to create a disturbance in the capital, but were discovered and repressed in time. With that exception, the public tranquillity has not been disturbed; and however defective, however weak may be the present government, those who have before their eyes the murders, the atrocious acts, the highway robberies daily committed under the government of General Miramon and his advisers Senor Diaz and General Marquez, cannot but appreciate the reign of law and justice. Foreigners, especially those who have suffered so cruelly under the arbitrary power of Miramon, and, as a consequence, of the hatred and intolerance which, as regards them, constitute one of the dogmas of the Church party in Mexico, cannot help making a profound distinction between the present and the past."*

Of Juarez Mr. Matthew said in the same despatch: "President Juarez, though void of the energy demanded by the existing crisis, is an upright and well-intentioned man, excellent in all the private relations of life."

As to the government of Juarez, the Envoy of Great Britain characterised it in these terms: "Civil and religious liberty have been established upon a broad basis. Peace is the only thing required for the development of constitutional principles and the intellectual progress of the people."

Mr. Matthew accordingly forbore to urge his government to intervene in a threatening manner; far otherwise. "If the present government," he wrote, "or the present principles of government are not supported in some manner openly by England

* "Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Mexico," pp. 9—11.

and the United States, either by means of a protective alliance, or by means of a declaration that no revolutionary movement will be permitted at any of the ports situated on either ocean, new and deplorable convulsions will afflict this unhappy country, to the great prejudice of British interests—to the great detriment of commerce, and to the disgrace of humanity."

I pause, for want of space; but whoever will take the trouble to cast his eyes over the blue book, wherein are contained all the elements of the Mexican question, will find in it the official, the irrefutable proof:

That the anarchy in which Mexico has been plunged and the financial distress which has thence ensued, far from being imputable to the government of Juarez, have been the work of the faction opposed to that government.

That it was by that faction—the Church party—that was uttered, in the time of its ascendency, the cry, "Death to foreigners!"

That it was that faction which, when it was supreme in Mexico, violated the dwelling of the English Consul, broke open the chests, and stole 600,000 dollars belonging to the Mining Companies.*

That the spoliations and murders, which have furnished matter for so many complaints, constitute the exploits of those very men whom it has been the misfortune of the deluded imperial government to have for its auxiliaries in Mexico.

That if, on the 9th April, 1862, and not in 1861, the English and the Spaniards withdrew from the common action, it was because they, at least, declined to have such auxiliaries, and because the object of the expedition, clearly enunciated in Article 2 of the Convention of the 31st October, was to obtain a certain financial reparation from Mexico, but not at all to interfere with its internal affairs.†

Lastly, that the government of Juarez, in whose favour the *armed universal suffrage* of the Mexicans has pronounced in such a signal manner by the defence of Puebla, is the only legitimate

* See, in the Blue-book respecting the Affairs of Mexico, the correspondence of Manuel de Zamacona with Sir C. Lennox Wyke, p. 39.

† See the despatch addressed by Earl Russell to Lord Cowley, the 30th September, 1861, p. 94; the text of the Convention of the 31st October; the report of the Conference of Orizaba, pp. 114—121, 2nd Part.

government in Mexico, the only one which represents the idea of liberty and progress, the only one which rests on the national will, the only one with which it is the interest of France to treat,—unless, indeed, the Empire be resolved to brave the risks of an expedition, undertaken upon the faith of false intelligence and lying promises, of an expedition too remote not to be ruinous, of an expedition condemned in whispers by France, condemned aloud by England, the object of suspicion to Europe, odious to America, and from whose bosom, sooner or later, may proceed complications of formidable significance in the relations of the new world with the old.

LETTER CLXIII.

MR. ROEBUCK A PARTISAN OF THE CONFEDERATES.

May 17th, 1863.

Recognition of the South—such was the object of a numerously-attended open-air meeting held at Sheffield the day before yesterday.

Mr. Roebuck had engaged to speak in favour of the Confederates, to demand that aid should be afforded to them, at least indirectly. He was faithful to his appointment.

Mr. Roebuck the Liberal, Mr. Roebuck the Radical, publicly taking act and part with the slave-owners! Such a scandal would be almost beyond comprehension, had not Mr. Roebuck, for some time past, been studying to alienate all his old friends, and to disconcert all his old admirers. A combative man whom nothing intimidates, who finds pleasure in challenging the Powers of the earth with a martial swagger, and in scolding the people with the rudeness of a Danubian peasant, Mr. Roebuck acquired an exceptional importance in the House of Commons by his ardour in braving despotism. By what aberration of judgment such a man came, after a visit to the Court of Vienna, to vaunt beyond all bounds the liberalism of Austria, to propose her for a model to constitutional governments, and to insist that the English should join themselves to her in an intimate manner, is a mystery which nobody has yet penetrated. It is only certain that Mr. Roebuck, suddenly transformed into a missionary of

Austria, astonished, scandalised, and turned against himself his own party. It is, perhaps, what he desired. There are some men so made, that when they grow weary of striking their adversaries, they repose themselves by a change of exercise, and by cheerfully striking their friends. It was, however, an excess of inconsistency into which nobody ever suspected Mr. Roebuck to be capable of falling. It seemed impossible that a man, impatient of any sort of yoke, enemy of every form of administration, that a man whose political career, at its outset, had been marked by the display of violent personality, of an almost brutal independence, should one day be smitten with a feeling of tenderness for the American planters, and should open his heart to an unbridled hatred towards that Republic of North America so favourable to the development of individual sentiment. This phenomenon has come to pass.

At Sheffield, which he represents in the House of Commons, Mr. Roebuck declaimed against the North, and exalted the South, exactly as if he were addressing a meeting at Richmond. All the common-places which for the last twelvemonths have been dragging their slow length along through the secessionalist journals, were gathered together by him, repeated, and sifted together, without the slightest trouble being taken to touch them up even in form. A bad cause, it seems, does not favour eloquence.

Mr. Roebuck was desirous to make his hearers understand that he was no partisan of the institution of slavery. This is the invariable rhetorical precaution to which, in their harangues, the partisans of the South believe themselves bound in conscience to have recourse. But that in no way prevents Mr. Roebuck from demanding an intervention in favour of the slave-owners,—their recognition as an independent State—the communication to them of the considerable force which would accrue to them from their formal recognition by England. And why? Because, according to Mr. Roebuck, it is England's duty to protect every people that asserts its own independence.

It is idle to refute such a pitiful argument, already a thousand times refuted. What can you say to a logician with whom you are obliged to premise that an independence employed in keeping down a whole race does not merit the sympathies of a free nation?

The speaker was accordingly interrupted at every sentence by

cries of, "But slavery! Slavery! You are for slavery, then!" He might have been interrupted, I fancy, in a manner still more embarrassing, had any one asked: "Why England, in India, crushed the Sepoys in arms, in the name of independence, against the conquerors of their country? And if it were to happen to-morrow that Ireland, starving and in despair, were also to assert her independence, what would England do?"

But did interest and passion ever suffer themselves to be convinced by reason? "It is as an Englishman, it is in the interest of England, that I am going to speak to you," was Mr. Roebuck's *exordium*; and to considerations drawn from national egotism he took care to add one which he knew to be calculated to affect English pride: "The Americans of the North are a mixed race. The pure English race is there, where the South is doing battle, and the Confederates have fought as Englishmen know how to do." A grand argument, that, on this side of the Channel! Its effect was not lost upon the meeting at Sheffield, if we may judge by the result: "This meeting is of opinion that the Government would do well, in the interest of England and of the world, to enter into negotiations with the principal Powers of Europe, to bring them to recognise the independence of the Confederate States."

Do not imagine, however, that this resolution was carried by a very imposing majority. The partisans of the North were there in force, and protested with extreme energy. The orator was several times stopped short by exclamations vibrating with indignation. The work-people present especially seemed much excited, for the class here which supports the North is that of the working men, and you may have an idea of the vehemence of their sympathies by the following fact. When Mr. Roebuck began to enunciate his proposition for the recognition of the South, the terrible cry was uttered, "Never! we should have a civil war in England."

LETTER CLXIV.

A DIPLOMATIC INTERVENTION.

June 20th, 1863.

The news of the atrocities committed in Poland has caused a thrill of horror to pass from one end of England to the other.

When, some years ago, General Haynau thought proper to visit England, he was recognised, you may remember, in a London brewery, and straightway the work-people, seized with a generous fury, drove ignominiously from amongst them, as unworthy to appear before men, a flogger of women. Let the Russian General Mourawieff apply this to himself, if it be true that he has threatened with the knout every Polish woman who dresses in mourning.

Yesterday, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, in the House of Lords, and Mr. Scully, in the House of Commons, asked of the Government what was known respecting this infamy; and Earl Russell, in the House of Lords, and Mr. Layard, in the House of Commons, declared that the Government had not yet received any official communication on the subject. Perhaps so; but let us hope that it will not be long before light is thrown upon this matter. In the meantime, nobody has doubts but that the Russians are up to their knees in innocent blood.

When Lord Stratford de Redcliffe spoke yesterday of priests executed without trial, of women and children dragged to the slaughter-house, of inoffensive persons massacred by soldiers transformed into wild beasts, of public functionaries hanged for having addressed respectful remonstrances to the Emperor, he merely summarised the history whose frightful details fill the journals, and furnish matter for a thousand anathemas. Vaunt now to us the march of intellect, the blessings of a civilisation prompt to develope itself, and so forth. All that is stereotyped nonsense. In the annals of human ferocity is there an age that presents a greater accumulation of horrors than the one in which it is our fate to live?

Here are men stained with crimes of which savages would

blush to be accused; and if you ask what manner of men they be, you are told that they are personages illustrious in diplomacy and war, men of excellent tone and refined manners, who have figured with distinction round the green cloth on which is played the fate of the world; who have been received at the tables of potentates; who would have fancied that they were conferring an honour upon you or myself if, meeting us in a room, they had held out their hand to us! What is the meaning of this subversion of moral feeling? How far will this scandalous defiance hurled at the human conscience venture to go?

It is true that, for the moment, human conscience and moral feeling are under the protection of chanceries. "On Wednesday," said Earl Russell yesterday, "a despatch was forwarded from Paris, Vienna, and London, for St. Petersburg. It contains the exposition of the views of the three Governments upon the present state of things in Poland, and these views are almost identical." Very good; but what next?

If the propositions made to Russia are rejected by her, what part has England decided upon taking? Will she stand forward, her hand upon her sword? At the sitting of the 8th of June, in replying to Lord Ellenborough's very just remark that diplomacy is condemned to impotence when its force is not supported by actual force, Earl Russell pronounced these characteristic words: "For my part, I do not conceive what advantage could result from an armed intervention in favour of Poland. I see in an interruption of the peace of Europe only confusion and calamity. I do not perceive any clear and distinct object which could justify, on the part of the British Government, a recourse to arms, and I protest beforehand against all idea of this kind."

The Emperor Alexander is thus put fairly on his guard. It is optional with him to treat the propositions of England as he pleases—he may put them into his waste-paper basket without any evil consequences ensuing. The Government has been kind enough to tell him this beforehand, so desirous is it to leave him at perfect liberty to form his decisions. If he yields, it will evidently be his own fault. But his fault, I suspect, will consist in his not yielding.

Hear what Earl Russell says: "A powerful nation like England is, to my thinking, bound by the treaties of 1815. We have therefore proposed terms reconcilable with those treaties."

And that is what they call intervening in a diplomatic way in favour of Poland!

But these treaties of 1815, now invoked, have caused all the misery of the Poles. They confirmed, sanctioned, consecrated the thrice-repeated crime of the partition. They rendered entire Europe the direct accomplice of an act of brigandage for which until then she was no further responsible than by having cowardly tolerated it. They declared downright robbery to be an integral part of international law. Who, then, is interested in seeing confirmed, sanctioned, consecrated afresh, the spoliations of which Poland was the victim? Is it Poland, perchance? Ask her, and judge.

The Poles must be mad to accept, except through compulsion, such a basis. All in vain does the diplomacy of intervention hold out to them the lure of a particular Constitution. The experience of the past enlightens them as to the future. They know what is the worth of scraps of paper which nothing protects against a bayonet thrust. They know what is the weight of an Opposition whose members are liable to be sent off to Siberia at the first frown of the master. It is not to win a Constitution, but to be born again unto independence, that is, unto life, that the Poles have risen in an access of sublime despair. "A Parliament," as the *Saturday Review* justly remarks, "may be a sovereign assembly, as in England, but it can also be nothing more than a butt for the insolence of a Minister, as in Prussia." If the Constitution given to the Poles by Alexander I., and so brutally annihilated by his successor, failed to persuade Poland to become Russian, how can any one hope to attain such a result at the present day—at the present day, when between Russia and Poland there exists a new abyss, which a million of dead bodies would not fill up?

Besides, what manner of Poland is it which the British Government, speaking by the mouth of Earl Russell, proposes to recognise? It is that which, at Vienna, was composed of the duchy of Warsaw, and that only. Now, the insurrection, let it be borne in mind, extends almost from the shores of the Black Sea to those of the Baltic. How is it to be supposed that the Poles of what is called "Congress Poland" will separate their cause from that of their distant brethren also in arms? It pertains to their most sacred duty to do nothing of the kind, and it is also their dearest interest, their only hope of salvation being in

the immensity of the space which their oppressors have to traverse.

Such being the state of things, what is to be hoped from the intervention of diplomacy, as it has been described and defined by the Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Great Britain?

The idea of an armistice has been put forward; and it is quite clear, as Earl Russell explained, that negotiations with the avowed object of bringing about a reconciliation between Russia and Poland cannot take place with any hope of success so long as Russians and Poles are cutting one another's throats. But, on the other hand, as was pointed out by Lord Ellenborough, what can be imagined more chimerical, and, even were it not chimerical, more fatal to the Poles, than an armistice? The Committee which directs the efforts of insurgent Poland is a secret committee, which acts after the manner of invisible spirits; how, then, is any negotiation to be entered upon with what for the Poles is something full of life, but for the Governments of Europe only a phantom? And then, to what a degree must reliance be placed on the fatuity of the Poles, if any one supposes them capable of subscribing to an armistice! To ask it of them is to urge them to suicide. An armistice, under existing circumstances, would be of the most powerful service to the interests of Russia. A suspension of arms would allow her to concentrate her forces at her leisure, to organise her means of attack, to prepare for the resumption of active measures with decisive completeness and energy. Where, on the other hand, would there be any hope for Poland if she were so imprudent as to pile her arms, were it only for an instant? Woe to the insurrections which suspend their blows! Woe to the revolutions which take breath before they have conquered!

Thank Heaven! the Poles are not ignorant of all this. We may expect, therefore, to see them reject a form of protection which, in reality, would protect only their enemies. And what will happen if the Emperor of Russia affect to show himself of a compliant disposition, as his interest enjoins him? Will the Poles be accused of obstinacy? Will they strike up hymns in Foreign Offices in honour of the moderation of the Emperor Alexander, the august and magnanimous? In that case diplomacy would have extended her ægis over the Poles with no other result than that of apparently putting them in the wrong, and of thus counteracting the sympathies of peoples. No; such suppositions are inadmissible.

We ought to believe, and we do believe, that the intervening Powers have actually in view to succour Poland in an efficacious manner, while helping Russia to issue from the blood-soaked slough in which she is making such a turmoil. Only it seems to us, and in England it is the almost universal opinion, that they are mistaken both as to the end and the means.

The end ought to be the absolute independence of Poland.

The means cannot be good unless it be resolved, in case of necessity, to place might at the service of right.

LETTER CLXV.

A MILITARY SCANDAL.

June 21st, 1863.

An enormous military scandal keeps every mind here awake, agitates public opinion, has already furnished, and threatens to continue furnishing, matter for a thousand impassioned comments.

The position of the personages concerned adds to the melancholy and tragic interest of the question. Colonel Crawley, of the 6th Dragoons, at present in India, General Farrell and Sir William Mansfield, both of whom are serving in that distant country, Sir Hugh Rose, Commander-in-Chief in India, and, lastly, the Duke of Cambridge, a Royal Highness—the Duke of Cambridge, who is invested with the general and supreme command of the forces of England—such are the men who, at this moment, are called before the bar of that all-powerful tribunal, Public Opinion.

The deaths of a sergeant-major and his wife constitute the gravamen of the charge upon which the human conscience in England is, at this hour, summoned to pronounce its verdict.

It is a sad story.

About two years ago Colonel Crawley, of the 15th Hussars, received, while in India, the command of the 6th Dragoons. Regimental dissensions, which remain covered with a thick veil, having given rise to a keen sentiment of hostility between Colonel Crawley and the officers under his command, Captain Smales, paymaster of the regiment, wrote a letter in which were stated facts that had the gravity of so many accusations. Among other

things, Captain Smales alluded in his letter to the circumstance that Colonel Crawley was never present on parade. The latter replied by simply bringing his subordinate before a court-martial.

Among the witnesses whom Captain Smales proposed to produce were the three sergeants-major Lilley, Duval, and Wakefield. Was Colonel Crawley afraid of their testimony? Was he resolved to prevent Truth from issuing from her well in her nudity? It is at least certain that, without waiting for them to be examined, he sent for them to his quarters, and in the presence of two or three friends subjected them to an examination the object of which was evidently to warn them of the danger of indiscretion. This attempt at intimidation does not appear to have succeeded, for on coming out from their interview the three sergeant-majors were placed under arrest as guilty of a *conspiracy*. At the same time Colonel Crawley informed Major-General Farrell of the decision he had come to, and asked for authority to change the simple into close arrests. General Farrell immediately brought the case to the knowledge of Sir William Mansfield, the Commander-in-Chief of the Presidency, and, while waiting until the latter should pronounce an opinion, authorised Colonel Crawley to keep under close arrest the three poor fellows whose evidence he was anxious to stifle.

Sergeant-Major Lilley was confined in a bomb-proof building—his dungeon being a room exposed to the sun, which the heat of an Indian climate was likely to transform into a tomb, and which was rather an oven than a human habitation. In this his wife, who was dying of dysentery, had a bed, and to her physical agony were joined the tortures of a moral agony still more terrible—sentinels being posted in the very chamber, three paces from the bed of sickness, and the unfortunate woman being compelled in their presence to obey those laws of nature which modesty enjoins should be executed in secret. She expired in horrible agony.

Article 99 of the English Military Code lays down that no officer or soldier can be detained in prison before trial for more than eight days. In the case under notice this article was violated without scruple. At the end of a few weeks one of the three sergeants had gone mad; as for Lilley—he was dead!

No inquest was held; all that was done was to call in the regimental surgeon, who, after examining the dead body, reported: "Death from apoplexy!"

In the interval the trial of Captain Smales had taken its course; but, in consequence of various circumstances, the court-martial had adjourned before Sergeant-Major Lilley's death, whose freedom from arrest ought at least to have followed upon that adjournment. Sir William Mansfield reprimanded General Farrell for not having understood this. But it was too late.

The whole of the details of this frightful story were laid before Sir Hugh Rose, Commander-in-Chief in India, and it might have been fairly expected that, after clearing up this mystery of iniquity, he would have inexorably punished the guilty; he did nothing of the kind. So far from it, he gave credence to the report that Lilley had killed himself with drink, an accusation based upon a canteen-keeper's bill stating the quantity of spirituous liquors supplied to the prisoner. This accusation was soon peremptorily contradicted. It was shown that the spirituous liquors delivered at the prison had been exclusively consumed by the sergeant's wife, to whom they had been prescribed as remedies.

And the Duke of Cambridge? The Duke of Cambridge, on being informed of what had passed, judged it sufficient to administer a very mild reprimand to Colonel Crawley, and maintain him at the head of his regiment.

Such are the facts as alleged. They were no sooner known in England than they produced an explosion of indignation which you may more easily imagine than I can describe. They have been denounced in both Houses of Parliament, respectively by Lord Shaftesbury and Mr. Fortescue. Mr. Coningham did not scruple to attack the Duke himself, demanding an explanation of the consideration shown contrary to justice, and to the pain and sorrow of honourable minds. "An inquiry! an inquiry!" is the cry that escapes from every one's lips. Pressed by clamours whose volume was daily becoming more formidable, the Duke of Cambridge has given instructions to bring Colonel Crawley before a court-martial—in India. But this step is looked upon as a means of saving the guilty, and from all sides murmurs are sharply heard. They who desire justice to be done, hope nothing from a trial that is not conducted in England.

LETTER CLXVI.

WHAT ENGLAND FEARS AND WHAT SHE DESIRES AS REGARDS POLAND.

June 23rd, 1863.

The last sitting of the House of Commons presented singular and unexpected results.

A discussion was to have come off yesterday, on a motion of Mr. Hennessy, to the effect that the Queen should be petitioned to intervene in such a manner as should at least obtain justice for Poland. The day had been fixed, and was looked forward to with impatience. Mr. Hennessy had the Prime Minister's word for it; and, in fact, faithful to his engagement to the honourable and persistent defender of the Polish cause, Lord Palmerston asked, at the very opening of the sitting, that the question should be brought forward without delay.

But was it prudent to enter upon so grave a subject before knowing what was Russia's reply to the propositions of the three Powers? Why be in such haste? Why discuss at hazard in the dark when, by having a little patience, the advantage would be enjoyed of a discussion with full knowledge of facts and in clear light?

In this sense spoke Mr. Beaumont, Mr. Kinglake, and Lord Enfield; and the House of Commons, on being consulted, decided by a majority of 165 votes to 110 that the debate should be adjourned—that is to say, that Lord Palmerston's engagements should be considered as null and void.

It was equivalent to indirectly charging with heedlessness a man broken in to habits of prudence—aye, of official prudence.

Mr. Horsman protested against this vote, in the pungent language that is peculiar to him. But the decision was made, and there was no means of undoing it.

It is strange, however, that an incident which seemed calculated to turn aside, at least for that evening, all that related to the Polish question, should actually have led to an official explanation of the purport of the three diplomatic notes addressed to Russia. Without being forced to it, or provoked, and even

without any one expecting it, Lord Palmerston, usually so reserved, informed the House that the recommendations submitted to the appreciation of Russia by England, in this acting in concert with France and Austria, comprised six clauses, to wit: A general and complete amnesty; national representation based upon the principle adopted by Alexander I. in 1815, conformably to the stipulations of the Treaty of Vienna; an administration exclusively composed of Polish public functionaries; entire liberty of conscience; use of the Polish tongue on all public occasions and in all that touches upon the education of the people; a regular system of recruitments. "We have strongly urged," Lord Palmerston added, "the cessation of hostilities."

The veil is thus rent asunder. We know, to a certainty, what is the meaning of the intervention of diplomacy in this affair. The objections which such a programme conjures up were happily summed up by Mr. Disraeli, when he said: "To this problem there are only two possible solutions—the unity of the Russian empire, or the independence of Poland."

It is, in fact, idle to exercise one's ingenuity in discovering palliatives and inventing combinations; it must always come round to this—either decidedly to take act and part for Russia, or to take act and part for Poland. Every middle course is clearly out of place.

But how is it to be conceived that it can have entered into anyone's head to give, as a basis for the future relations of Russia and Poland, the Treaties of Vienna? Besides that those treaties are justly odious to the Poles—whose subjection they legalised, whose oppression they sanctioned—is it comprehensible that, in presence of the results they have produced, anyone can still believe in their efficacy? To prevent effects from reproducing themselves, you have recourse to the same causes! To find a remedy, you call in the disease! But is experience, then, of no avail? Has logic, then, ceased to pass current on this earth? Or is the world really tainted with madness?

Instead of seeking to restore to the Poles, who do not ask for it and will have none of it, a constitution like unto that which was accorded them by Alexander I. in fulfilment of the Treaty of Vienna, why have they not taken the trouble to reflect for one moment upon what prevented that constitution from continuing to live, or rather prevented it from being born alive? There is a force against which all the diplomatists of the earth combined can

do nothing, and that is, the nature of things. If the constitution of Alexander I. has perished, it is simply because it had the nature of things against it. The same man cannot be at the same time a despot and a constitutional sovereign. He cannot govern one portion of his subjects according to one order of ideas and another portion of his subjects by an order of ideas radically different. To require only to change one's dress in order to change one's functions is good for comedy cooks; but history proves that it is useless to expect from mortal gods the universal aptitude of Maître Jacques. The idea of subjecting a free people to a people of serfs, with the hope that the former will never use its liberty to recover its independence, and that the latter will never be tempted, by the example, to become free, is—if the expression be permitted—an idea fit only for a buffoon. Whence comes it—since so much importance is attached, as concerns Poland, to the stipulations of the Treaty of Vienna—that, at the same time with the proposition to restore a Polish administration, nothing is said about a Polish army? I hear it answered: "If a sword were placed in the hand of Poland she would immediately make use of it to cut the odious bond which unites her to Russia." Undoubtedly; but what more decided proof can be given of the absolute impossibility of what is proposed? There is not one constitutional liberty among those which it is wished Russia should grant and Poland accept—not one which it would not be the right and duty of the Poles to convert, if they could, into an instrument of independence.

This right, they have clearly enough shown that they understand it. This duty, they have clearly enough shown that they are the men to fulfil it.

But what avails it to argue at any great length upon the chances of duration which a system similar to that which originated in the treaties of 1815 would possess, when it is its very restoration that has become the impossibility—at least if diplomacy does not deem itself dispensed from obtaining the consent of those Poles in whose favour it pretends to intervene.

This consent the Poles cannot give, and never will give. The abyss hollowed out between the two peoples by the present war, and by the atrocities which characterise it, is one of those that are absolutely impassible. In yesterday's sitting at first Mr. Layard, and afterwards Lord Palmerston, it is true, contradicted, on the faith of a despatch received from the Russian Government,

the fact of the indecent and barbarous menace attributed to General Mouravieff, concerning the Polish women in mourning garments; but both Mr. Layard and Lord Palmerston declared that they had the confirmation of later reports relative to the other cruelties imputed to the Russian soldiers. It was, therefore, with a shudder of horror that the House of Commons listened to the recital of the following facts from the lips of Lord Palmerston: "Not far from Wilna a body of Polish insurgents, composed of about 120 men, were surrounded by a superior force. The insurgents laid down their arms and surrendered. A messenger was immediately despatched to the commandant, to ask what was to be done with them; and, upon receiving his answer, the Russian soldiers threw themselves, with fixed bayonets, upon these men who had surrendered, who were unarmed. Forty were massacred upon the spot; twenty were conveyed to the hospital, to die of the wounds they had received."

And it is one of these peoples who is asked to grant a liberal constitution to the other, with the hope that that will render them henceforth good friends! Lord Ellenborough had, indeed, reason to exclaim a few days ago in the House of Lords, "If the Emperor Alexander holds out his hand to the Polish people, how can you expect that they should take it? That hand is red with Polish blood!"

Even supposing, then, the Court of St. Petersburg should accept, with the full intention of violating them at the proper time, the engagements by which it is invited to bind itself, the problem will still remain unsolved. The real difficulty lies in the acceptance of these propositions by the Poles. Was this difficulty foreseen? And if it were foreseen, how is it proposed to surmount it? Every one here shrugs his shoulders if you mention an armistice that is to be observed until both parties come to a mutual understanding.

To what recognised, or simply to what known Polish authority is one to apply to induce the Poles to lay down their arms, or to guarantee that they will not resume them in any part of the country until the expiration of the delay agreed upon? Where is the central power that shall pledge itself to the strict observation of the armistice by a multitude of small detached parties, fighting at great distances from one another, and without regular means of communication, either with the centre or with each other? In this path of diplomatic compromises it is impossible

to take a step without knocking up against an insurmountable obstacle.

If it is meant to treat solely with Russia, and, in the event of her acceding to an arrangement, to enforce the decision upon the Poles, then, indeed, the question becomes simplified: but there, also, we enter upon the horrible. Are we to imagine the protectors of Poland agreeing to act as the accomplices of her oppressors, enjoining her to throw aside her avenging scythe, commanding her to bend the neck beneath the yoke which diplomacy has had the goodness to forge for her, and, should she obstinately persist in resisting, lending active aid to the Russians? Mezentius caused his victims to perish by attaching them to dead bodies, but he never pretended that it was for their advantage and from a feeling of philanthropy. Such a supposition, however, is ridiculous; and thus we are again flung back into a labyrinth whence there is no issue.

In reality, we may be quite certain that the English Government is fully sensible of this. Nothing could be more striking than the emotion with which, in the sitting of the 8th of June, Earl Russell avowed his doubts, his embarrassments, his perplexi ties. For an instant his utterance, usually cold and measured, had an accent of pathos: and when, pronouncing the word humility as the one that best depicted his moral situation, he complained that, with regard to that tragic question of Poland, the weight he bore was too heavy for him, I cannot say that there were not tears in his voice.

The fact is, that the English Government is seeking the salvation of Poland without seeking her independence, and by declaring its own decision, happen what may, not to go to war, is aiming at an impossibility and perpetrating an absurdity.

Mr. Forster, as an amendment to Mr. Hennessy's motion, demands that the Queen of England should say to the Emperor of Russia: "In violating the Treaty of Vienna, you have released Great Britain from the contract by which she sanctioned your sovereignty over Poland." That is infinitely more reasonable, and is every way infinitely better than to found negotiations, in the efficacy of which nobody believes, upon an arrangement that has already been trampled under foot, and can only be trampled under foot, so utterly opposed is it to common sense. One thing certain is, that Mr. Foster's idea has been warmly received here. It appears to supply the means of officially stigmatising the conduct

of Russia, which is the wish of everybody in England, without, however, having to draw the sword, which is the dread of everybody in England.

LETTER CLXVII.

THE WORTH OF PUBLIC OPINION IN A FREE COUNTRY.

24th June, 1863.

In my last letter but one, after narrating the tragedy which terminated in the death of Sergeant-Major Lilley, I stated that the Duke of Cambridge, pressed by the clamour of public opinion, had at last issued instructions to bring Colonel Crawley before a court-martial; but that as, according to the wording of that decision, the affair would be judged in India, many protests and murmurs had been uttered against it. Singular and admirable power of public opinion in England! Had I delayed only one day to send you my letter, I could have added, by way of postcript: "It has been decided that the affair should be judged here, and not in India."

The trial, indeed, could not have taken place in such a distant country without furnishing the guilty person, or persons, an easy chance of escape from the rigour of the law. In India the issue of this form of trial depends in a great measure upon the commander-in-chief. He it is who appoints the officers who constitute the court, and with him dwells the power either of commuting or of cancelling the verdict. Now, it must not be forgotten that Sir Hugh Rose, the commander-in-chief, happens, in the present case, to be personally compromised, seeing that, through a deplorable effect of *esprit de corps*, he approved the conduct of his subordinate and, what is worse, attempted to tarnish the memory of his victim. Again, English officers in India watch with jealous care over the preservation of the prestige which, in the eyes of the natives, surrounds their authority—despots, they naturally desire to pass for blameless. It goes, besides, against the grain, that in the country where they bear rule, and recognise no right of control, they should have to appear, in the presence of subject populations, in the humiliating position of incriminated persons. Add to this that, in the affair under notice,

it is not only Colonel Crawley who will have to answer to the charges brought against him, but also General Farrell, Sir William Mansfield, commander-in-chief in the Bombay Presidency, and Sir Hugh Rose, commander-in chief in India,

Everybody perceived that, under such circumstances, there was some risk that justice would not be done, while everybody was determined that justice should be done.

As soon as Colonel Crawley found himself so severely taken to task by the English press, he endeavoured to exculpate himself by throwing upon Lieutenant Fitz-Simons the responsibility of the cruel measures which cost Serjeant-Major Lilley his life: but this responsibility the lieutenant throws back upon his colonel, and it is upon this point that the trial will turn. What matter! The incidental question is so closely bound up with the affair in its integrity that, no doubt, everything will be dragged into open daylight. It will be known how Lilley came to die, and who is to answer for his death before the English people.

This is what the public here eagerly desires to ascertain, even should the result prove damaging to the reputation of officers as distinguished, for instance, as Sir William Mansfield, who of all her generals is the one that would be most valuable to England in an Eastern war.

The passion with which some persons pursue the clearing up of this dark business is so great, that they are raising the question whether it would not be legal and expedient to invoke, in the present case, the competence of the civil court against the accused person or persons—an opinion based upon certain passages in Stephen's Commentaries upon Blackstone, and also upon precedents of a terrible character. Sixty-one years ago a Colonel Wall was hanged at Newgate for having illegally inflicted upon a soldier under his orders a punishment, from the effects of which the latter died. Observe, not less than thirty years had elapsed since the perpetration of the crime, during which long interval the guilty man had expiated his fault by a life of misery spent in voluntary exile. Nothing would do; the blood of the soldier cried for vengeance; the law was inexorable. The *Daily Telegraph*, in recalling this circumstance takes care to remark that the softening of manners since that period forbids that execution to be quoted as a precedent; but it is quoted to prove that if, in the Lilley affair, any one is guilty he must be punished

with severity; and, the journalist adds, "The life of an English soldier is not less sacred to-day than it was under the reign of George III."

For the rest, as regards this sort of offence, impunity would be all the more regrettable in England, because the very existence of the army rests solely upon the system of voluntary enlistment. On the day when the soldier shall cease to be protected by the law against the despotism or brutality of his officers—on the day when the army shall become unpopular with the class that furnishes the recruits—on that day a mortal blow will prove to have been given to the system which enables England to maintain a military force at once sufficient for defence and not incompatible with liberty.

In the sitting of the 12th of June, Mr. Coningham exclaimed: "In the name of the officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers of the English army, I demand justice, yes, even though justice should strike at generals, even though blame should rise so high as His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief of the army."

This will give you an idea of the violence of the attacks to which the Duke of Cambridge has laid himself open in confining himself in the first instance to reprimand a man whom it was his duty to put upon his trial.

His defence consists in saying that the commander-in-chief in India enjoys, in matters of discipline, almost absolute independence, upon which he, though supreme over the military forces, was unwilling to encroach.

A poor excuse! The power of the Queen over the army is quite as absolute in India as in the interior of England. In principle, the commander-in-chief in India is no more independent than the general who commands in Ireland. It is true, however, that as a matter of fact he is allowed a wide margin for his acts, on account of the distance; but that does not prevent the Crown from having the right and the duty to intervene in cases in which, as in the present one, public interests and justice call for intervention.

The Duke has also alleged, by way of justification, that he had no complete knowledge of the facts until afterwards.

To that it is replied:—

That the affair had been going on for two whole months in all the Indian newspapers;

That it had furnished subjects for animated discussion in all military circles;

That complaints and reports had been numerous;

That, moreover, the Duke knew enough about it, when he deemed a reprimand sufficient to justify his being reproached with having shown a degree of indulgence, the excess of which could only be explained by an aristocratic spirit, and the *esprit de corps;*

That he was not equal to his duty or to his responsibility, in obeying, instead of heading, a movement of public indignation;

That in such a case, men invested with authority ought not to wait, before displaying a just severity, until the explosion of a great scandal forces their hand;

In short, that it is not for that purpose they are "paid."

I repeat, without softening them, the terms of the series of charges fulminated by certain widely circulated organs of the English press, because nothing can show in a clearer light the power, the worth, the weight of public opinion in a free country.

The Duke of Cambridge is a Royal Highness. He is the grandson of George III., the cousin of the Queen of England. And yet, see how he is dealt with, for an act of excessive good-nature or of blamable partiality by the first journalist that turns up—an obscure, an anonymous judge, but whose judgment is not, for that, the less peremptory when founded on justice.

Compare this with what passes in France.

LETTER CLXVIII.

DESPOTISM OF PUBLIC OPINION IN ENGLAND.

June 25th, 1863.

I HAVE told you what public opinion is worth in England. Does it not on certain occasions make its power too greatly felt? I fear it does.

In France public opinion is the asylum in which freedom, hunted out of institutions, finds shelter; in England it is the fortress where despotism, hunted out of institutions, sometimes fixes its abode.

Why keep it secret or how deny the fact? Public opinion in

England is a power which in truth has nothing in common with that which governments are wont to arm themselves withal against aught that annoys them; but which weighs none the less unkindly on the thinker and the philosopher, discouraging or morally chastising every bold initiative, clipping the wings of every spirit that would rise into unknown regions, and promising the joys of gratified ambition only to those who are content to walk in beaten paths.

Public opinion in England! Woe to him who defies it! There will be invoked against him no text of law; before no court will he be taken; there will be started after him no police-officers, no gendarmes; but he will run the risk of dying for want of air, and of disappearing crushed by the weight of indifference or of scorn!

In France, when M. Proudhon launched his book "*La propriété, c'est le vol,*" many were wroth, many cried out against it; but all that only gave the work a great success. In England neither ministers, nor lawgivers, nor judges, nor policemen, would have had to mix themselves up with the matter; but the book would probably have found no one curious to read it, no one willing to publish it, and perhaps no one who would agree to print it.

To sacrifice your own opinions to public opinion is in France considered a blamable weakness on the part of a politician. In England His Majesty Public Opinion smiles on such sacrifices as the homage due to himself.

Open the biography of Sir Robert Peel. Was there ever a more vehement foe to the emancipation of the Catholics? And yet by whom after all was the Catholic Relief Bill brought forward? By him. Was there ever a more determined foe to the repeal of the prohibitions weighing on corn? Yet to whom was England indebted for that celebrated reform? To him. So, here is a statesman who spends his life in contradicting himself, refutes his speeches by his deeds, who leads, dissolves, resuscitates, abandons the Tory party. And what is the consequence? Does he discredit himself? Quite the reverse. His concessions become his gains; the defeats of the thinker are the victories of the minister; his popularity wins all the ground lost by his convictions. When he dies, all parties join in mourning him At once there rises a statue to the man who could sacrifice his own opinions to public opinion.

The inevitable result of this too absolute sway of public opinion is to pass under the dull gauge of uniformity not only ideas, but tastes, usages, habits. Even in the smallest trifles people in England are not entirely their own masters. I know a Frenchman who cannot without discomfort keep his hat upon his head. Well! He has never chanced to go up the street, hat in hand, without immediately becoming the jest of passers-by. Such too was the lot, as I remember, of every foreigner with a moustache before the Crimean War; that is to say, before the Irishman Russell had written to the *Times*, whose correspondent he was, that beside the bearded warriors sent forth by Lutetia, the smooth-skinned men of Albion produced upon the Turks the effect of rope-dancers. At that time whoever broke the laws of *respectability* with reference to his upper lip and chin, made himself liable to be refused employment in any warehouse, if he wished to learn a trade; to get no pupils, if he was a teacher; to tout for customers if he opened a shop.

As for public opinion in its relations with religious questions, you must come here to have any conception of the pressure which intolerance in its mildest form can wield. Heretics are no longer burnt as of yore; the law is no longer applied to the persecution of philosophers: assuredly not; and still more is it just to acknowledge that a very wide latitude is granted by this Protestant country to the practice of the Catholic worship. In reality the system of legal persecution is no longer enforced. Still this is not absolutely true. In 1857, at the summer assize in Cornwall, a man named Thomas Pooly, whose character and private life were without stain, was condemned to twenty-one months' imprisonment for having written on a door some offensive words aimed at Christianity. In the same year Messrs. George Jacob Holyoake and Edward Truelove were pronounced unworthy to sit upon a jury, because they had honestly owned to having no theological beliefs; and for the same reason a foreigner, Baron Gleichen, could get no justice done him against a thief. Mr. John Stuart Mill, who recites these instances in his beautiful book "On Liberty," is justly indignant with the legal doctrine, by virtue of which no one may bear witness in a court of justice unless he believes in God, or in the existence of another world. "That is tantamount"—exclaims Mr. J. S. Mill—"to the outlawing of every one thus circumstanced; it is tantamount to affirming that it is lawful to rob or to assault him, when the

robbery or the assault has had no other witnesses than himself or persons of like opinions; nay more, it is tantamount to securing impunity for thefts and outrages, whoever may be their victim, as often as their authentication rests on the evidence of the persons in question."*

A pretty doctrine that which, starting from the assumption that every atheist must be a liar, admits the evidence of atheists who lie, and rejects that of atheists honest enough, sincere enough, bold enough, to proclaim their conviction in the face of a society which denounces it!

It would be wrong, then, you see, to pretend that the age of legal persecution is absolutely and for ever closed. All we can fairly say is that the cases in which intolerance shows itself armed with the law are extremely rare. Not there does the evil lie. It is found in the brand impressed by public opinion on philosophic beliefs which differ from the orthodoxy commonly accepted, from the conventional orthodoxy. "So effective is this stigma"—Mr. John Stuart Mill is again speaking—"that in England there is more dread of avowing opinions branded by society than there is in other countries of uttering opinions liable to a judicial penalty."†

And this tyranny of received ideas is encountered at every turn. This one who would venture, perhaps, in the privacy of intimate friendship, to whisper into your ear what he thinks about certain passages in the Bible, will tremble at the mere notion of expressing himself to the same effect in public. Another who, if he obeyed only his own convictions, would abstain from going to church, will yet make his way regularly towards his church, prayer-book in hand, to do as everybody does, because it is "respectable."

This tendency of Englishmen to conform to the prevalent opinion, alike in their behaviour and their talk, offers, along with some advantages, some very serious inconveniences. The undue pressure of public opinion hinders the free play of original characters; it smothers impulsive intellects; it forces those whose active wit is unsustained by strength and boldness of character to bury within themselves the truth as they understand it, to dissemble their thoughts, to play tricks continually with their consciences; it takes from all the profit they would derive from

* On "Liberty," p. 55. † Ibid, p. 58.

the free utterance of what each has in his head or his heart; it punishes as a crime the most useful, the most desirable of all forms of courage, that of the mind; it keeps society in a state of intellectual stagnation too often confounded with a state of calm; it produces, in short, now under the seductive name of *decorum*, now under the imposing name of *respectability*, a kind of existence which, if not quite the same as hypocrisy, is not unlike it.

It is well, moreover, to observe that, where public opinion has the power, it has also the caprices of despotism. How can you be certain beforehand that, if circumstances led public opinion to deliver itself strongly on a given point, freedom on that point would run no danger of being crushed? In 1858, for instance, a writer having bethought himself of unfolding a doctrine which here is almost unanimously, I think with good reason, rejected, what happened? That the freedom of the press was violated without scruple, and, more serious still, in the name of the law. For it would be a mistake to believe that in England the law holds sacred the freedom of the press. In its bearing on the press the law of England is at this moment what it was in the days of the Tudors. The power that really guards the freedom of the press in this country is public opinion, which presses indeed with all its weight upon the direction of the newspapers, but, as a set off, shelters them from the molestations of Government. The legal right of prosecuting journals exists; only, it is public opinion that prevents its exercise. Now, by what means can we make sure it will always prevent that exercise? It must be itself informed of the dangers of the despotism it wields; it must itself be led to understand the purport of those beautiful words of Mr. John Stuart Mill: "If the whole world, save one man only, were of one opinion, and that man of a different opinion, the whole world would have no more right to enforce silence on him than he, if it lay in his power, would have to enforce silence on the whole world."

LETTER CLXIX.

HISTORY OF CERTAIN FALSIFIED DESPATCHES.

24th June, 1863.

I.

The telegraph has just brought to England the news of Dost Mohammed Khan's death. According to the electric message, he must have died as he lived, like a man of war; and he must have breathed his last in the town of Herat, conquered at last.

Dost Mohammed Khan! That name recalls a fearful accusation, which for some years past has hung over Lord Palmerston, will follow him to the grave, and doubtless remain attached to his memory. Around that name are grouped a crowd of bloody mementoes, and it is impossible to pronounce it without having straightway brought before one's mind the most tragical error, the most fatal piece of injustice, that has ever marked the British rule in India.

There has yet, I think, to be written in this connection a very interesting page of history; all the more interesting because the successful efforts here made to suppress the truth have become a scandal worthy to be denounced aloud, to be denounced unceasingly by whosoever knows the facts and judges them with an honest heart.

On the 16th January, 1837, Lord Palmerston, in a despatch addressed to Earl Durham at St. Petersburg, complained strongly of the conduct of Count Simonitch, Russian Ambassador at Teheran, whom he accused of urging Persia to attack Herat. "It would be so contrary to the principles professed by the Russian Government"—wrote Lord Palmerston—"had it given Count Simonitch instructions to act as he has done, that he must have acted without instructions." * Lord Durham communicated the despatch to Count Nesselrode, who did not hesitate to say. "If Count Simonitch has acted as they assert (which I deny), he happens to have acted in direct opposition to his instructions."†

* Correspondence relating to Persia and Afghanistan, laid before Parliament in 1859.

† Ibid.

The assertion could not have been more peremptory. But all diplomatists are more or less of M. Talleyrand's opinion: they believe that "language was given to men to hide their thoughts." The English Government, therefore, spite of the formal assurances received from St. Petersburg, continued to take alarm at the kind of influence exercised by Russia over the Persian Court. At the Foreign Office they were still persuaded that the Russians burned to trace out a path to India; that Persia would help them in that; that the town of Herat would be theirs, in fact, as soon as it fell to Persia, and that Herat would so become their advanced post.

At that period the man who reigned over Kabul and Affghanistan was Dost Mohammed, who, on the one hand, was fighting with Runjeet Singh for the possession of Peshawur, and on the other saw himself menaced by the pretensions of Persia to Herat. Exposed to a twofold danger, he needed the support of some powerful alliance. He had to choose between Russia and England: his choice fell on England.

All this the English envoy at Kabul, Sir Alexander Burnes, never left in doubt, and this he invariably affirmed in all his despatches, as the sequel of this story will help to prove.

Sir Alexander Burnes was a man full of intelligence, energy, activity; but in India he held only a subordinate post. The Governor General of India at that time was Lord Auckland, and it chanced, unluckily for England, that Lord Auckland's opinions were not in harmony with those of Sir A. Burnes, either on the policy to pursue towards Dost Mohammed, or on the facts that ought to serve as the starting-point of that policy. Lord Auckland, with a thousand proofs of the contrary before his eyes, was pleased to think that the "Dost" was at the bottom of his heart a sworn foe to England; that there was nothing but treachery in his demonstrations of friendship. And this belief the Governor-General was but too successful in imparting to the Foreign Office.

Things were in this state when, on the 19th December, 1837, Sir A. Burnes received a visit from Dost Mohammed Khan. The Ameer held in his hand a letter which had just been addressed to him by his son, the Governor of Ghazni, and which he was anxious to show to Sir A. Burnes. It announced the arrival at Ghazni of a Russian agent on his way to Kabul. "What ought I to do in this case?" asked the Ameer of the English envoy.

"I am come to consult you. I wish to have nothing to do with any other power than England. So long as I may be allowed to reckon on her sympathy, I will enter into relation with no other government. If you wish it, I will give an order for the Russian agent to be expelled from my dominions, or else detained: in short, I will do whatever you desire." "Do you know," asked Sir Alexander in his turn, "for what purpose this agent was sent to you, or even if he is really a Russian agent?" "I have read," answered the Ameer, "all the letters he wrote from Kandahar, and I know nothing more." "It is a sacred rule among civilised nations," observed Sir Alexander, "not to refuse the receiving of emissaries in time of peace, and I could not take on myself to advise you against receiving a man who avows himself properly accredited; but it rests with you alone to show the sentiments which influence you, by disclosing freely to the British Government the motives which bring this agent hither." "With great pleasure," said the Ameer.

Of all these circumstances Sir Alexander Burnes made faithful report in a despatch addressed by him on the 20th of December, 1837, to Sir William Macnaghten, secretary of the Indian Government.*

Three days afterwards he wrote straight to the Governor-General himself, that the Afghans, threatened on the one hand by Persia, by the Sikhs on the other, had been led to seek the protection either of the Persians or the Russians, but that the support they now desired was that of England; that Dost Mohammed had resolved to make common cause with the English, and with them alone; that, if they wished seriously to baffle the intrigues of Persia and Russia, it was needful to adopt energetic measures, to procure from Runjeet Singh a reasonable arrangement touching the Peshawur affair, and in that way to conciliate for all time the attachment of Dost Mohammed and the Afghans.†

In answer to this despatch, Sir William Macnaghten made known to Sir A. Burnes that his policy was not approved of, and that no one believed in the course he expected the Ameer to follow. If the Russian agent was not sent back unconditionally, Sir A. Burnes must expect to be recalled. Although the views

* Correspondence of Sir A. Burnes, No. 1 of 1859, second session.

† Mr Dunlop's motion for a Select Committee on the Afghan papers. House of Commons, 19th March, 1861.

prescribed for his supporting were contrary to his own, the English envoy at Kabul tried to win Dost Mohammed into ridding himself of the emissary who inspired the English Government with such misgivings; and finding the Ameer disposed to comply with his request, he hastened to inform Sir W. Macnaghten of it in a despatch dated February, 1838. All was in vain. They had made up their minds to crush the Ameer. Sir Alexander Burnes was recalled, and, on hearing the news, Dost Mohammed exclaimed piteously, "I have not forsaken the English; it is the English who have forsaken me."*

There was living then at Loodianah on a pension given him by the Indian Government, the Afghan chief Shah Shoojah, who, ten or eleven years before, had been deposed by his own subjects. England resolved to restore him to his throne, after making room for him by the overthrow of Dost Mohammed Khan.

"It is the duty of the Indian Government," said Lord Auckland in a despatch dated August, 1838, "to depose Dost Mohammed, and to reinstate the legitimate sovereign." Lord Auckland, representing a country which never admits the doctrine of divine right, gave the name of *legitimate sovereign* to a prince whom the Afghans had thrust aside, whom they would not have, and whom it was needful to impose on them by force. But this prince promised to be only a serviceable puppet in English hands. It was that which made him legitimate!

While the Indian Government was thus making ready to harass the Ameer on the plea of his being a friend of Russia and receiving a Russian agent, Lord Palmerston addressed remonstrances to the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, on the conduct of that cabinet's emissaries in Central Asia. Here is a passage from the despatch of the English Minister, dated 26th October, 1838. It relates to the Russian agent of whom mention has been made above. "The undersigned is instructed to state that a Russian emissary named Vicovitch, but who sometimes bears the name of Omar Beg, and calls himself an officer on the staff of the general commanding at Orenburg, has conveyed to the sovereign of Kabul letters from the Emperor and Count Simonitch, of which the British Government have copies. From the language which, according to the accounts received by the British Government,

* Mr. Dunlop's motion for a Select Committee on the Afghan papers. House of Commons, 19th March, 1861.

that emissary has used, alike in Kandabar and Kabul, but one conclusion can be drawn, namely, that he has been using his best endeavours to detach the Afghan chiefs from all connection with England, and to drive them to seek support first in Persia and finally in Russia." *

This note remained unanswered, but it crossed a letter from Count Nesselrode to Pozzo di Borgo, dated from St. Petersburg, 20th October, 1838. In it were these words: "In thus throwing the fullest light upon the facts, our cabinet is able to give that of London this positive assurance, that in the mission of M. Witkewitch (Vicovitch) to Kabul, and in the instructions which he received, there has never been the least thought of a purpose hostile to the English Government, nor the slightest idea of troubling the tranquillity of the British possessions in India."†

On the 20th December, 1838, Lord Palmerston replied to Count Pozzo di Borgo: "Her Majesty's Government accepts as entirely satisfactory the declaration of the Russian Government, that it cherishes no designs hostile to the interests of Great Britain in the East Indies."‡

Who could ever have dreamed that, while thus avowing its full confidence in the good faith of Russia's friendly asseverations, the English Government was bent on chastising Dost Mohammed as guilty of sympathising with Russia? Such, however, was the event. In 1839 an English army crossed the Indus. The results were as dreadful as the cause was unjust. The Afghan War became for England what for Augustus had been the disaster which forced from him the famous exclamation, "*Give me back my legions, Varus!*"

It remains to tell by what trick, or rather, to call things by their right names, by what falsifying of public writings some of the authors of that mad expedition sought to mislead history.

II.

It happened a very long time ago; but what matter? The word "actuality" is a barbarism in the eyes of those in whom the spectacle of human affairs awakens only a feeling of frivolous and transient curiosity. For those who are not content to think from

* "Correspondence relating to Persia," &c.
† Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

hand to mouth, for those who can perceive the link between yesterday and to-day, between to-day and to-morrow, for those who criticise the present and endeavour to read into the future by the light of torches which the past keeps ablaze, such a piece of retrospective politics contains a charm more real, more living, more truly *actual*, than the thousand gossipings which form the daily bread of the idle.

With this understanding I resume my narrative at the point where I left off, confident of drawing hereafter the inductions applicable to the present state of things. For this point must not be overlooked, that the chief figure in the picture I am drawing is a man who is still living, nay more, is at this moment prime minister of England, and, to speak correctly, the very incarnation of English policy.

The invasion of Afghanistan took place in 1839. The head of the ministry at that time was Lord Melbourne; but Lord Palmerston was Foreign Minister, and enjoyed as such an influence considerable, if not preponderating.

To know whether Dost Mohammed, the Afghan ruler, was a friend or not of the English, whether he did or did not favour the Russians, the British Government had to decide between the utterly conflicting despatches of Lord Auckland, Governor-General of India, and of Sir Alexander Burnes, British envoy at Kabul. According to Lord Auckland, Dost Mohammed was at heart an enemy, and should be treated as such; there was nothing to be seen but treachery in his expressions of friendship, but falsehood in the evidences of his sympathy, According to Sir A. Burnes, on the contrary, who was seemingly placed in a good position for judging aright, because he was present on the spot, the sovereign of Kabul strove only for the protection of England, was eager to deserve it, and turned his back on the Russian alliance.

Perhaps the British Cabinet would have been more distrustful of Lord Auckland's estimates, had it paid more regard to the kind of pressure which, in India, weighs on Governors and their following. In that remote country, in fact, Europeans are commonly so wearied with the monotony of their daily life, so hungry for anything new, that they would almost welcome an earthquake: while, as for the army, including those dependant on it, its natural bent is towards that which offers it a chance of distinction, of honour, of promotion, of large allowances.

Be that as it may, such considerations had no weight in the

opinions of Lord Melbourne, Lord Palmerston, and their colleagues. They scorned the wise counsels of Sir A. Burnes; they chose to believe in the infallibility of his superior, Lord Auckland; they determined to upset Dost Mohammed and on the wreck of his power to raise up that of Shah Shoojah, which a former revolution had thrown down. The Afghan War was undertaken. That was in 1839.

In the course of the same year the "Correspondence relating to Afghanistan" was placed before Parliament. What was the surprise, what the indignation, of Sir A. Burnes, when, on reading that correspondence, he saw how his despatches had been maimed, disfigured, falsified, so as to make him hold thoughts the very contrary to his real ones, to say the very reverse of what he had said! The documents which in 1839 were laid for inspection before the House, represented Sir A. Burnes as having urged the British Government to mistrust Mohammed, as having denounced him, as having furnished information of a kind to warrant his deposition, and to legalise the war against him. Sir A. Burnes, had no sooner read his own despatches, such as the art of the forger had made them, than he cried out, "This is an imposition."

In the meantime war was being waged in Afghanistan. I say again, England was soon able to cry out with Augustus, "Give me back my legions, Varus!" The inhabitants of the kingdom of Kabul rose bodily; the English in 1842 were exterminated; they had been spending fifteen millions sterling to bestrew the ground with twenty thousand of their corpses.* Ten years of financial embarrassment and a long eclipse of England's sun in the East—such were the results of an expedition as insensate as it was unrighteous. Sad to tell, Sir A. Burnes, who, having done all he could to prevent, had not felt himself bound to refrain from taking part in it, was counted among the victims. His body was hacked to pieces.†

Before his death he had sent to England an attested copy of his despatches as they were really written. On learning his tragical end his family wanted at least to guard and avenge his memory. Little by little the report spread that a forgery had been committed; that the good faith of Parliament had been

* Speech of Mr. Bright in the House of Commons, March 19, 1861.
† Speech of Mr. Dunlop, March 19, 1861.

overreached; that far from having counselled that baleful war, Sir Alexander Burnes had neglected no means of warding off its horrors; that the despatches presented as from him to the House of Commons had been printed with suppressions and alterations which changed their meaning in the most inconceivable way.

These rumours led Mr. Henry Baillie, member for Inverness, to ask in 1842 for the production of the entire correspondence relating to Afghanistan; and this demand he rested on the plea that the documents produced in 1839 had been falsified. The fact was unconditionally denied by Lord Broughton, then President of the Board of Control, and the House of Commons passed over the matter: "the English public," as Mr. Dunlop remarked, "being accustomed to place entire confidence in the honour of the Ministers of the Crown."*

In 1843 Mr. H. Baillie's motion was taken up by Mr. Roebuck, but rejected by a majority of 189 votes to 75.

In 1848 Mr. Anstey returned to the charge; and once more the truth was suppressed.

Things were in this state when, in 1851, Mr. Kaye published his "History of the War in Afghanistan."

But for that book Sir A. Burnes would be credited with bringing on the greatest disaster ever suffered by the English in India, as completely as even now, in the eyes of many good people, M. Louis Blanc is credited with the founding of the national workshops in 1848. Oh, sacred Truth, how is thy name taken in vain! Wait; there is a history of the Afghans by a German author. Open it, and you will find a chapter headed "Sir Alexander Burnes, Instigator of the War." Not that the author is guilty of having knowingly betrayed the truth. He himself claims to rest his narrative on the State papers laid before the English Parliament. The matter is plain enough. How could he ever have imagined that his narrative was resting on a forgery?

But see what was implied by Mr. Kaye's book! People read in it this passage, which made a great impression on the public: "It is right that it should never be forgotten by those who would form a correct estimate of the character and career of Alexander Burnes, that both have been misrepresented in those collections of State papers, which are supposed to furnish the best materials of history, but which are often, in reality, only one-sided compila-

* Speech of Mr. Dunlop, March 19, 1861.

tions of garbled documents—counterfeits which the Ministerial stamp forces into currency, defrauding a present generation, and handing down to posterity a chain of dangerous lies."*

It was not easy for the matter to stop there; the less easy because for Mr. Urquhart it was one of those turns of luck for which he has never ceased lying in wait since his great quarrel with Lord Palmerston. Mr. Urquhart, who is perhaps the man of all men best versed in the secrets of diplomacy, the *arcana imperii*, and who could render priceless services to the cause of truth if his boundless hatred of Lord Palmerston and the extravagances born of an over-subtle intellect did not condemn him to give a false colouring to real facts and to draw absurd conclusions from facts well-considered—Mr. Urquhart has succeeded in establishing in England I know not how many committees whose mission it is to keep an eye on the manner in which foreign affairs are conducted. Newcastle, Manchester, Winchester, Leeds, Bolton-le-Moors, South Shields, Stockport, &c., beheld committees of this kind established some years ago; and though their action has never been regarded as much in earnest, their influence has more than once been manifested in such a way as to bring cruel suspicions on those against whom it was directed. One of these associations, that of Newcastle, published a report of what had passed with reference to Afghanistan. In 1858 other associations, affiliated to the first, petitioned Parliament for a full publication of the State papers which were said to have been falsified. In short, so stirring an impulse was given to this question that Mr. George Hadfield, member for Sheffield, having in 1858 taken up the motion presented in 1842 by Mr. H. Baillie, and renewed in 1843 by Mr. Roebuck, the House of Commons at length ordered the publication demanded.

It took place in 1859; and the version of 1859, compared with that of 1839, removed all doubts of the reality, the extent, and the purport of the official forgeries, in order to load the memory of a man who died in his country's service with the responsibility of a war which had never been undertaken if his information had been accepted and his counsels followed.

* Kaye's "War in Afghanistan," vol. ii., p. 13; quoted by Mr. Dunlop, March 19, 1861.

III.

The English Government, if you remember, published, rather more than two months back, under the title of *Polish Correspondence*, the collection of State papers relating to that Polish insurrection which keeps all Europe in suspense. In that, thanks to the despatches sent from St. Petersburg by Lord Napier, from Warsaw by Colonel Stanton, from Vienna by Lord Bloomfield, every one was admitted, or fancied himself admitted, in respect of the Polish question, into the green-room of history.

Nothing could be better, I admit. Since diplomacy now more than ever holds in its hands the destiny of nations, it is right at least that the nations should be invited from time to time to look clearly into the causes and circumstances which determine its acts; and, in this regard, the publishing of what are here called *Blue Books*, apart from their historical interest, is of inestimable value—when the publication is not stained with fraud; when there are neither systematic omissions nor artificial suppressions. For in that case it becomes the most dangerous process that could be employed for misleading opinion, perverting the judgment of the public, and cheating posterity.

Now, how far is it allowed to depend on the contents of the diplomatic correspondence which, in all important cases, is laid before Parliament and the people of England? That is a question which the following facts will help perhaps to solve.

I have related how, in 1859, Mr. Hadfield at last succeeded in forcing from the House of Commons an order for publishing in full the "Correspondence relating to Afghanistan," which had been published in 1839, but with suppressions and alterations of a kind calculated to alter its character. The Blue Book, in which the documents in question were this time collected, was printed under the care of Mr. Kaye, who was then in the India House, and who marked each of the falsified passages in the collection of 1839. The falsifications were numerous; they had a lamentable significance; they betrayed the hand of a master. I will quote only a few. They will give a sufficient idea of the rest.

On the 20th December, 1837, Sir Alexander Burnes had addressed to Sir William Macnaghten, Secretary to the Indian Government, a despatch in which he announced the arrival at

Kabul of an agent direct from the *Emperor of Russia*. In the correspondence as published in 1839 the words "the Emperor of Russia" were, for reasons which I will tell you presently, suppressed, and in their stead was inserted the word *Russia*.

The despatch consisted of six paragraphs. Of these there had been left two only—those which were limited to stating the mission of a Russian agent; and four were suppressed—those, namely, in which Sir A. Burnes reported the sympathy of the ruler of Kabul with England, his intention to seek no other alliance than the English one, and his determination to send away the Russian agent at once, if such was the desire of the English.

On the 23rd December Sir A. Burnes had addressed to the Governor-General of India himself another despatch, in which he affirmed the excellence of Dost Mohammed's intentions towards England, insisted on the need of an alliance with him, and concluded in these terms:—"If Dost Mohammed's conduct, and his eagerness to make frank disclosure of all that has passed, meet with your Lordship's approval, I think the first step to be taken should be to write a letter of thanks to that ruler for the proofs he has given of his attachment and fidelity."

Not a word of all this in the despatch of the 23rd December, 1837, as published by the English Government in 1839. From that part of the despatch which alluded to the arrival of a Russian agent, to his interview with the Ameer, to the brilliant offers he had been commissioned to make, nothing had been cut out; but of all that proved the good intentions and the good faith of Dost Mohammed, I say again, there was not one word.

Hence the mistake committed by the German historian, Charles Zimmermann, who—in the work he published at Berlin in 1842, under the title of "The Theatre of War in the heart of Asia"—quoted the very despatch above named, which he never knew to be a garbled document, in order to show that the instigator to the war in Afghanistan was Sir Alexander Burnes.

To the appeal made by the latter on behalf of Dost Mohammed, Sir William Macnaghten had replied by a long letter, formally contradicting the opinion of Sir A. Burnes, and meeting his policy by an entirely opposite policy. This letter was omitted from the correspondence published in 1839, with the exception of three paragraphs bearing on the need of dismissing the Russian agent from Kabul.

Need I point out the spirit which prompted these mutilations? The English Government, in its mournfully unwise adhesion to the policy of Lord Auckland, Governor-General of India, plunged into a war which, proclaimed under evil auspices, had ulterior consequences of a truly terrible kind. Its responsibility would have been put to a fearful test if it could have been accused of shutting its ears to the wise counsels of Sir A. Burnes—of paying no attention to his reports—of having, in fact, taken the wrong road at the very moment when somebody was there to show it the right one. To escape from such an accusation, it was needful to assume that in India there had been but one opinion as to the line that should be taken; it was needful to make it out that, in the eyes of Sir A. Burnes as in those of Lord Auckland, the conduct of Dost Mohammed had been that of a friend to Russia —of an enemy to England; it was needful to give, in that way, a colouring of justice and necessity to a war of which Mr. Kaye, the historian, has ascribed the disasters "to the curse of God resting upon an unholy cause."

True, that to do so was to slander a faithful servant of the nation, to sport with the confidence of the public, to make a league with falsehood; but power looks not so closely into things, and it never, alas! enters into the ways of policy to be on good terms with morality.

It is worthy of note that, in the correspondence published in 1839, the words "Emperor of Russia," or their equivalent, had —wherefore, we shall see presently—been erased as many as fifty-four times, and replaced by other words.

This was a strange cause to try, and you can imagine how they who risked an exposure spared no pains to avoid it. For a long time it seemed as if they would succeed in keeping out the daylight; but at last, on the 19th March, 1861, a speech of Mr. Dunlop's kindled amidst the darkness a lamp never more extinguishable. When with grave indignation and quiet energy he had recounted the sad story of which I have just sketched out the leading features, Mr. Dunlop concluded by naming a committee to be appointed to carry on an inquiry.

I have before me the answer which at that awful moment Lord Palmerston gave to Mr. Dunlop, and I think that no one ever carried farther the art of debating at length on what lay outside the true question, while shirking the question itself. The Minister's defence bears wholly on the fact that Lord Auckland was

Governor-General, and Sir A. Burnes merely a subordinate agent; that it lay with the chief, not his subaltern, to decide which was the better part; that the English Government would naturally shape its policy according to the views of the chief rather than those of the subaltern; that Sir A. Burnes had done wrong in taking for gospel whatever had been told him by an Afghan chief, and in the simplicity of his nature had forgotten how perfectly men of that race are formed for intrigue, &c., &c. And besides, was it not a chapter of ancient history. How could any one think of wanting an inquiry to be made into the conduct pursued by Government in 1837 and 1838? If it was deemed opportune to enter on retrospective researches, why not go higher—back to the treaties of 1815, to the operations which took place in the Peninsula, to the Walcheren expedition, to Copenhagen, and higher still? It was rather late to inquire if they had done right or wrong in undertaking the Afghan war, &c., &c.

Useless to observe that this was not the question at all. No one was concerned in any way to know whether the English Government in 1837 had been warranted in yielding more of its confidence to Lord Auckland than to Sir A. Burnes; there was no question whatever about opening an inquiry into the Afghan War. The true points of the question were these, and these only:—

Is it true or not that the despatches relating to the Afghan War were falsified?

Is it true or not that those falsifications were calculated to impose unjustly upon Sir A. Burnes the weight of responsibility for that ever-baleful war?

Is it true or not that, in thus acting, the Government of that day, represented by Lord Palmerston in the existing Government, misled Parliament and the public?

Is it true or not that, in the compulsory production of State papers with a view to enable the nation to pass judgment on the policy of the ministers, to alter the meaning of the despatches made over for publication, is to lead opinion astray, to baffle its vigilance, to destroy all trust in the uprightness of public men, and to sap the bases of constitutional government?

And when a fact of that kind has taken place, is it true or not that it is important in the highest degree to take care that it shall not be repeated?

When, on the 23rd February, 1848, Mr. Anstey demanded

the impeachment of Lord Palmerston, among the charges with which he armed himself against the latter was this very mutilation of the correspondence relating to Afghanistan. On that occasion Lord Palmerston confined himself, as he has since done in repelling the assaults of Mr. Dunlop, to saying, that, in fact, the despatches of Sir A. Burnes had not been reproduced in full; but that the suppressions bore on passages of no importance, unconnected with the question under review.

Never was statement less accurate. If suppressions had occurred, it was, on the contrary, because they bore on passages of extreme importance; because they tended to raise a belief that, among the agents of England in India, there had been but one opinion on the need and justice of the Afghan War; because they were designed to mask the very grave circumstance that a huge disaster would have been averted, if the policy recommended by the English envoy had prevailed.

It would, in truth, be too much of a good thing if ministers could cut out what they pleased from every document offered by them to their judges, with power to say afterwards, when they are caught redhanded, that, in their eyes, those curtailments were of no consequence: as if they, and not Parliament, had to determine what was or was not important!

Still, if the omissions had been pointed out in the despatches in question! But, no: they were not even marked by dots, and the breaks of continuity were disguised, either by additional phrases, or by substitutions of words introduced with infinite art into the text.

Of these substitutions the most remarkable—and it had occurred as many as fifty-four times—consisted in replacing the expression "Emperor of Russia" by the expression "Russia" or "the Russian Government." Induced to explain himself on this point in the sitting of the 19th March, 1861, Lord Palmerston gave the following explanation, which deserves quoting literally:—

"I say that it was perfectly legitimate, in the letter to which allusion has been made, to substitute the words 'Russian Government' or the word 'Russia,' and to omit expressions tending to identify the emperor in person with the communication made to Dost Mohammed. If you found that the Russian Government had entered into relations with another power on your frontier, in pursuit of an end manifestly hostile to your interests, and if you wished that government to renounce its designs, nothing,

assuredly, would be less wise than to bind him to the maintenance of the policy you would have him disavow, and to make it impossible for him, consistently with honour, to proceed to the recantation which your remonstrances were directed to obtain."

God forbid, that in this great solicitude of the English minister for the *honour* of the Russian Emperor we should see a proof of the asserted treasons which, with an odious perseverance, Mr. Urquhart and his friends never cease imputing to Lord Palmerston. But it must be allowed that the explanation is most extraordinary. What! Supposing we were sure that the Emperor of Russia cherished hostile designs against England, supposing that hostility was *manifest*, we should help to save his *honour* by facilitating his recourse to a disavowal, that is, to a falsehood! It is possible, then, to lie with honour, provided the affair makes no noise! Strange way of understanding the laws of morality!

To a man of Mr. Bright's stamp all this naturally furnished matter for severe charges. The address which that rude tribune delivered in the sitting of the 19th March, 1861, is one of the most terrible that ever fell from his eloquent lips. It is one trait of Lord Palmerston's character to trouble himself about nothing, to pass smiling through the most critical ordeal, to meet the most serious charges with a jocularity which nothing can disconcert, to answer anathemas with jests. On the occasion to which I refer, his habitual serenity did not seem to forsake him; but inwardly he must have experienced a deep emotion when, with a voice mighty to raise the storm, Mr. Bright exclaimed, "It is worth our while to know if it be possible that, either here or in India, any man holding a high position is so utter a stranger to the feeling of honour and justice as to have furnished this House with a garbled, false, and forged statement of the opinions of a public servant who died in the service of his country!"

So definite had been Mr. Dunlop's accusation, so weak Lord Palmerston's answer, so scathing Mr. Bright's reply, that everything seemed to announce a solution fatal to the minister, when a powerful auxiliary reached him from the Tory camp.

To justify Lord Palmerston without wandering from the question was what Mr. Disraeli could neither achieve nor dream of attempting; but, with great cleverness, he gave the wrong turn to men's minds by reproaching Mr. Bright with having long since known the facts he had just been proclaiming, and with having, nevertheless, lent his support to the formation of the ministry of whose

chief he was now appearing as the accuser. Starting from that point, Mr. Disraeli pleaded the cause of indulgence, the cause of oblivion. Some soothing words from Mr. Walpole, and Lord John Russell's eagerness to declare in favour of his colleague, the prime-minister, did the rest. The inquiry moved by Mr. Dunlop was lost by 159 votes to 49. On this occasion, strangely enough, Lord Palmerston's preserver was his great rival, Mr. Disraeli. What motive determined the latter in such a crisis to sustain the cabinet which it had always hitherto been and was always afterwards to be his part to batter in breach? Mr. Disraeli, minister expectant, perhaps thought that, in the interests of the power which he himself might be called to wield, it was good to contrive some creep-hole for ministerial responsibility.

Such was the upshot of this sad affair. The offence was perfectly proven; but it was of old date, was too serious, moreover, not to invite, if the matter was pressed, the scandal of an impeachment. They preferred to shut their eyes and pass on.

Had the threat, at least, any useful effect? No. Since the liberal party, in the matter of producing diplomatic documents, showed itself too exacting and too susceptible to please the ministers, a deplorable custom has been introduced; that, namely, of guarding through a private correspondence against the *inconveniences* of official correspondence. Whatever the Government would withdraw from public notice and discussion, it gets written by its agents in *private letters;* admitting into the official correspondence destined for the eyes of Parliament such things only as it deems likely not to expose it to a tiresome controversy.

See how diplomacy, even in a constitutional country, succeeds in filching its acts away from curious eyes, and how it turns out as true to-day as it ever was before, with the old adage, so new, ever quoted and ever to be quoted,—

"Quidquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi."

LETTER CLXX.

MR. ROEBUCK PLAYING THE CONFIDANT.

July 3rd, 1863.

Poor Mr. Roebuck! Decidedly the part which suited him was that of the Danubian peasant. This part sometimes has its advantages, and he ought to have kept to it.

Time was when Mr. Roebuck was not sorry to be taken for what Nature had made him. So bilious that even his talent has the jaundice, he derived from his very temperament a kind of appreciable power and an importance altogether unique. As he was known to have a combative eloquence, he was held in such respect as gentry of the bull-dog breed inspire. He will forgive me the comparison: he himself, if I remember rightly, saw no harm in having ascribed to him the warlike qualities of the canine race. Did not the partisans of the revolution which, in the sixteenth century, detached from Spain a part of the Low Countries, equip themselves with the name of *Gueux*, or Beggars? In like manner did Mr. Roebuck, during his best days, assume the name of *Tear 'em*.

And, to do him justice, those whom he tore at the period in question were not the weak, the oppressed, or their defenders. The dog, though one of the noblest animals in creation, fails so far in generosity as to bark at people badly clothed. On the contrary, Mr. Roebuck reserved his bites for the great ones of the earth, for kings and emperors; it was the sight of the purple that angered him. His sharp tongue spoke so boldly when it thundered against the idols of the earth! The very way in which he held his head aloft was so striking!

With changed times come altered manners. Through some mournful fatality it has come to pass that Mr. Roebuck has braved the atmosphere of courts; and, lo! our peasant of the Danube is no longer the same man. The only part of himself that still remains to him is his bitterness. But the honest roughness of the tribune, his proud scorn of the great, his wild yet saint-like love of right and justice, all that is gone. The Mr. Roebuck of the present shares the tenderness of good

society for the *gentlemen* slave-owners, and its highminded scorn for the rabble democracy of the United States. More than that, he likes to be introduced to the presence of sovereigns; he has no objection to enjoying the good graces of kaisers; his pride, still holding its ground, has so changed its character and its purpose, that it seeks no longer for aught save interviews and confidences of an august kind. He has visited the court of Vienna: he has been reflecting in Paris the brilliance of the stars; and he would not keep the world in ignorance of it all.

But, alas! metamorphoses are not always successful. Mr. Roebuck's entrance into the world of aristocratic ideas and his intercourse with sovereigns have not brought him happiness. "Don't force your talent; you can do nothing gracefully." The sitting of last Tuesday, compared with that of yesterday, has proved beyond dispute the excellence of that advice.

On Tuesday last, to give more weight to his motion for a formal recognition of the South, Mr. Roebuck deemed it his duty to bring the Emperor of the French on the boards, by prefacing his communications with this pompous announcement: "And now I should say that I know something as to the state of the French Emperor's mind, something which I am justified in communicating to the House." Whereupon every one shook his head and smiled,—speak, however, we are listening. Mr. Roebuck's version was this:

"Knowing that the Government of her Majesty the Queen of England had represented the Emperor as having changed his opinion on this subject," (the recognition of the South,) "and, knowing further, that my honourable friend, the member for Sunderland, was able to obtain an audience when he wished for one, I proposed to him, by way of ascertaining the truth, to cross the channel with me, and go and put the question to the Emperor." —Hereupon ironic laughter.—"My friend accordingly wrote, and we had an audience. The Emperor of the French informed us, that when he heard of the rumour prevailing in England (and he authorised me to say so in the House of Commons), he charged his ambassador in London to contradict the statement, to assure the English Government that his sentiments, far from being changed, were stronger than ever on the side of a recognition of the South, and to ask if it would join him for that purpose. In this respect there is no doubt possible; I answer for the truth of the fact. . . . ."

"I repeat, I answer for the truth of the fact, and I do not think the world has any doubt of my word. Moreover, I described to his Majesty the two lines of conduct which, in my opinion, he ought to follow in this case. I said to him, 'Your Majesty may address a formal demand to England—' at that word the Emperor stopped me, observing that he could not do so, and would tell me why. He told me, in fact, that he had some months before addressed a formal demand to England; that the demand had been sent to America and shown by Mr. Seward to the French Ambassador: that he looked on himself as having been badly treated in the matter, and did not mean to expose himself anew to the danger of similar treatment; but that otherwise it was his wish, his will, to act in concert with England in every matter, particularly in what concerned America; and this I was free to declare in the House of Commons."

It turns out there could not be a word of truth in the report made by Mr. Roebuck to the House of Commons. Not that he is capable of conscious treason to the truth, whatever it may be: no man, rightly or wrongly, was ever more sincere. But it is evident in the case before us, that Mr. Roebuck mistook from first to last the meaning of the words he was listening to. And this was demonstrated in peremptory terms by Mr. Layard, who answered in the name of the Government.

It follows from Mr. Layard's explanations:—First, that no communication relating to the project of mediating in America had been made to the English Government, since that which Count Flahaut read to it on the 13th November, without leaving a copy of the same;

Secondly, that this despatch had been divulged, not by the act of Lord Russell, but by that of the *Moniteur*, which published it even before the English Government had sent an answer:

Thirdly, that this very publication of the French despatch in the *Moniteur* determined the publication of the English despatch in the *London Gazette:*

Fourthly, that the proposal made to England, far from having been communicated by the English ambassador in America to Mr. Seward, had been communicated by Mr. Seward to the English ambassador.

In other words, this unlucky Mr. Roebuck turns out to have placed in the Emperor's mouth expressions utterly at variance with the facts. Few instances could be quoted of a denial so

complete, so conclusive, so crushing, as that of which Mr. Roebuck has had to endure the vexation. It will teach him that the part of questioner and confidant has its dangers when your ears are dull, your mind distraught, or your memory faithless. It is quite clear that Mr. Roebuck altogether misunderstood what was said to him.

Rough is the chastisement he has just undergone. He felt it coming when Mr. Layard rose. Hence his efforts to avoid it; hence his interruptions, his exclamations, his despairing cries of "I rise to order." But the Speaker was as inflexible as fate. "Order!" cried the sufferer, quite beside himself; "I insist on it." "And I too," straightway exclaimed Mr. Coningham; "I ask for a call to order. The honourable member is not dictator here."

Mr. Roebuck has just ended in all respects a sorry campaign. Strangely impertinent has been found his claim to initiate weak humanity into the secret thought of gods. It was also asked, by what right he strove to influence the deliberations of the House of Commons, the most independent assembly in the world, by the opinions of a foreign monarch. The *Daily Telegraph* pleasantly calls him "the member for Paris," and Mr. Bright the other day spoke of him as "the envoy extraordinary, or rather most extraordinary, of the Court of France."

As for the way in which he argued out his motion, last Tuesday, all one can say is that, this time, the pleader was worthy of his cause.

You would never guess why Mr. Roebuck declares the recognition of the South legitimate: his two reasons are that the North is at this moment getting the worst, and that England is interested in the triumph of the South. That's good! I like the straightforward honesty of that avowal. Might for ever! Make way for national selfishness! The worship of right belongs to poor souls. Besides, what are the men of the South, but true Englishmen? And of what are the armies of the North composed, but of the scum of Germany, and the scum of Ireland, mingled with the scum of America?

But I mistake: the speaker did pronounce the word "right" also. I owe it to truth to acknowledge that this word figures in his exordium. "Whatever fraction of a people wants to detach itself from the mass, has a right to do so if it has the power." Such, according to Mr. Roebuck, is the principle of

principles: that is the groundwork of what he calls "international morality." Ireland will do well to remember this axiom, if ever she has a fancy for imitating the secessionists beyond the Atlantic. And India! Well, let the sepoys take courage anew, let them make one fresh and powerful effort; Mr. Roebuck, we must suppose, is ready to proclaim their right and applaud their patriotism. Only let them manage somehow to be the strongest, for brute force enters as an essential element into the "international morality" of Mr. Roebuck.

One of the most curious passages in the speech of this doctor of morality is that where he accuses the people of the North of loathing the negro, of positively hating him, because they do not let him sit in their carriages, or invite him to their tables. The reproach is funny in a country like this, where the butler would deem himself a lost man if he ate at the same table with the footman. I like to think that Mr. Roebuck, who is intimate with sovereigns, does not hold in abhorrence, does not positively hate, every poor white devil with whom he is not wont to dine. But in short, if the people of the North are so culpable because they don't take the negro into their carriages, one cannot well see how the people of the South are innocent, who use him as they do their horses.

What use after all in refuting arguments of this kind? The point which Mr. Roebuck set himself to establish, namely, England's interest in recognising the South, is the very point which he never approached. He spoke of Lancashire's sufferings, of the cotton that does not come; all which we know perfectly; but how the recognition of the South will prevent distress in Lancashire and permit the coming of cotton, that is what he ought to have shown. Will the recognition of the South put an end to the war? No. Will it solve the question of the blockade? No. What then is the meaning of Mr. Roebuck's motion?

What does it mean? I will tell you. Mr. Roebuck hopes, and he does not hide the feeling, that the recognition of the South might bring on war to the knife with the North. To that he aspires. The greatness of the American democracy has long prevented him from sleeping. He thinks the hour has come to get rid of an importunate rivalry. "The *Warrior*,"—he said with charming frankness—"would alone suffice to destroy the whole American fleet of the North; the armies of that country

are in course of melting away; Washington is in danger; and my only fear is lest the South should win its independence without our aid."

How chivalrous that is! But how if, peradventure, Mr. Roebuck were deceived in his heroic reckonings? How if, perchance, the North should from the very extent of its perils draw redoubled energy and augmented force? Why has the vision of an invaded Canada never crossed the golden dreams of Mr. Roebuck? Has it never occurred to him that these words, "England is attacking us," would cause a thrill of warlike emotion and national fanaticism in every Irishman who, in America, is held aloof from fighting by his special characteristic hatred of the negro? Has he never for one instant dreamed of the democratic party whose opposition is just now one of the causes of Northern weakness, and which, in the event of a war with England, would make but one with the republican party? Has he forgotten that this American navy, which he treats with a scorn so arrogant, has inflicted on the English, whenever it has encountered them, the most tangible losses they have ever undergone by sea? And does he not know that a breach between the two countries would doom the people of England who suffer so much from the want of cotton to yet greater suffering from the want of corn?

All this Mr. Roebuck, blinded as he is by passion, is incapable of seeing; but all this the English Government sees, thank God! perfectly.

These turgid declamations Mr Gladstone met with reflections full of lofty wisdom, offered in the calm and sober style of the statesman. Neither the English Government nor England herself is at this moment inclined to seek adventures—that is a known fact. And it is very lucky for the people of England that, after refusing to draw the sword for Poland, they refused also to draw it for the slaveholders. If, being afraid to encounter war for a just cause, they were not afraid to do so for an unjust cause, it would be all over with their honour.

LETTER CLXXI.

THE LOVE OF THE MARVELLOUS IN ENGLAND.

July 4th, 1863.

It must, I fancy, be very sweet to sleep in what Camille Desmoulins calls "*le lit plein de songes de la superstition*," since, in all times and countries the number of those who lie therein is so great.

In France, that land of intellect, does not the eighteenth century show us how large is the place which history has been forced to give to tales of folly? If ever there was a rational century it was the eighteenth. What belief, saving the belief in God, escaped the terrible scalpel of Voltaire? How rough were the blows which every worship, save that of pure reason, received at the hands of the famous guests of Baron d'Holbach; Diderot, Boulanger, Helvetius, Roux, and so many others! And yet one could hardly quote a period when superstition wielded its sway more imperiously or more decidedly. Ay, at the very moment when all the echoes of Europe were about to bellow back the formidable laughter-burst of Voltaire, Count St. Germain could say, "I have lived many lives; I am immortal; I knew Jesus Christ; Francis I. was a great friend of mine," &c., &c. And he won thereby a good deal of influence, did this Count St. Germain. Madame de Pompadour took him into great favour. Louis XV. gladly shut himself up with him and passed whole hours in his company; the Duke of Choiseul, somewhat given as he was to set himself up for the Richelieu of freethinkers, found himself forced to treat St. Germain tenderly, the man who inspired a little fear in Voltaire himself. How could they help believing in so very amiable, sprightly, intellectual a person as St. Germain, when they believed in his servants who gave themselves out also as supernatural beings? As he was one day relating the particulars of his interviews with Julius Cæsar, one of those present referred to St. Germain's valet for information on some point or another of the story. "Excuse me, sir," gravely answered the valet, "I have no knowledge whatever of my master's relations with Julius Cæsar, having been in the Count's service no more

than five hundred years." Yet to many people this seemed, if not very simple, at any rate very credible.

Cagliostro too! Cagliostro, who followed St. Germain in the same triumphant career! Cagliostro, who, in his house at Paris in the Rue St. Claude, the house where Barras lived after him, wrought so many and various miracles, changing the coarsest metal into fine gold, foretelling the future, raising all sorts of ghosts, restoring gratis the health, bodily and spiritual, of people of all conditions, princes, great lords, great ladies, generals and soldiers, tradesmen, workmen, monks, courtezans, servants! Of the power he wielded, of the unrivalled popularity he was allowed to enjoy, there exist proofs without number, absolutely unanswerable. Hardly a lady of the court but had at that time Cagliostro's likeness engraved on her fan; and in how many palaces was there to be seen his bust in bronze or in marble, with this inscription, "The divine Cagliostro!" The nobles filled his ante room; the people reverentially besieged his door; the Duke of Luxembourg felt honoured by his friendship; the famous naturalist Ramond never spoke of him without a mixture of awe and dread; in short, if he found himself compromised in the trial about the necklace of Marie Antoinette, a trial which, by the way, brought about the most brilliant of his triumphs, it was owing to the irresistible sway he had gained over the Cardinal Prince de Rohan.

Was the wind fair then for superstition? Yet it was the very time when Helvetius was treating as an assumption the belief in the existence of the soul; when Diderot affirmed the possibility of communicating thought to matter; when Boulanger regarded history as a fanciful kingdom peopled with myths; when the learned chemist, Roux, sought to elicit from the analysis of matter the proof that there is no God; when, to conclude, d'Holbach published his "*Système de la Nature.*"

And the oddest thing is that d'Holbach, a sceptic of sceptics, was as credulous as a child in the ordinary affairs of life; Grimm even asserts, in his "Correspondence," that if any one in the baron's presence hesitated to believe some very ridiculous story, or some very improbable piece of news, he would get red hot with anger.

You will ask, perhaps, what I am driving at with this long preamble, and of what book this is the preface. This, sir, is to make a little more intelligible to your readers what I have to tell

them about a trial which has just come off, and which shows how far the love of the marvellous, a belief in the impossible, the worship of the absurd, have found means to develop themselves in England, beneath the shadow of free inquiry, and the rule of reason.

I ought to warn you, first of all, that the matter in question is not table-turning. And yet, Heaven knows that this, too, was not a failure in this serious country. If Mr. Home has not had much to complain of during his stay in France, he has certainly had every cause to deem himself lucky in his visit to England.

In a host of drawing-rooms he has only to show himself in order to see homage paid to his power over the invisible world; and he might have said with Cæsar, *Veni, vidi, vici.* I should astonish you if I called by their names the intelligences he has marshalled under his law, and the souls he has won by employing *spirits* to set tables turning, jumping, stamping, and dancing, to knot handkerchiefs under said tables, to suspend them in the air, to push sofas from one end of the room to the other, to tease persons present by pinching them on the calf or knee: for it is worthy of remark that the spirits do not plume themselves on being philosophers, or grave personages, and on keeping up with visible humanity relations of a serious character; no, they are little tricksy creatures who delight in playing a thousand school-boy games on poor visible humanity, without troubling themselves about the unfavourable opinion they may thus be giving us of the other world. Imagine, for instance, a handkerchief, held by no one, beginning to fly like a bird, and going to wipe an old lady's nose just when she least expects it. If that is the end and aim of another world, one could really do without it.

Be that as it may, Mr. Home in London has taken wonderfully in certain circles. He has been religiously admired by men of intellect, even of good sense, who never talk without laughing of the Neapolitan Saint Januarius. He has been the rage with ladies by no means saintly. A friend of mine, an Englishman, a very distinguished writer, who generally governs his imagination as a good horseman governs his steed, published some months ago, in the *Cornhill Magazine*, an article in which, with a candour beyond suspicion, he related the marvels of which Mr. Home had made him a witness, marvels whose detailed history has since been written by the latter himself. Cagliostro had the good luck to foretell the fall of the Bastille; Home up to

this moment has foretold nothing that I know of; but never mind, English credulity is satisfied at less cost.

But that tables, when they are tired of turning, should prophesy, that spirits should rap, and that even those should persist in believing in all this who, having asked the *spirit* of a famous grammarian if it were really he, heard him answer "I is,"—all that is little worth noticing. In what respect are such follies more English than American, German, or French? The turning tables and the spirit-rappers are a plague, a fashion; how escape from an epidemic disease? And what courage does it not need to brave a fashion! Marvels of this kind I pass by. What I mean to describe to you is a superstitious mania of a kind less fleeting, less fashionable. I assure you that in England they count by thousands the fortune-tellers, male and female, the card-prophets, the astrologers of villages and even of large towns, the wizards, witches, soothsayers; and I may add that all those people make an excellent trade of it, so great is the number of dupes. I can only speak of what in this respect has happened in the country on the strength of the judicial reports, which from time to time lighten up this strange side of English life; but it is in my personal knowledge that there exists in London an incredible multitude of frightful dens where old women as ugly, decrepid, dirty, and squint-eyed, as befits their employment, disclose to Mistress So-and-so the exact moment at which it will be her fate to see her husband again who is at sea, and to Miss Such a one that she may dry her tears, that she is still beloved, and that the quarrel will not last.

Well! I forgot that I have to tell you how a gallant admiral has just been condemned in twenty shillings damages for having handled somewhat lightly the reputation of a sage who reads the glittering book of the stars, draws horoscopes, owns a crystal ball in which you see now Eve, now St. Luke, now Titania, and heaven knows what besides. And mark that this illustrious astrologer, once simple lieutenant in the navy, initiates you into the laws of destiny at so much a head. 'Tis a pleasant and instructive story, I assure you.

II.

Wallenstein, the illustrious Wallenstein, the great rival of Gustavus Adolphus, believed in astrologers. Schiller, in his fine

History of the Thirty Years' War, represents him as consulting Zeni, his astrological teacher, on the eve of every battle. I am surprised that Lieutenant Morrisson of the Navy did not put himself under the invocation of so high an authority or one of like weight in the action he lately brought against Admiral Belcher.

This Morrisson, having served in the Royal Navy, and been afterwards employed in the coast guard, had, it seems, during his naval career enjoyed all the leisure needed for gaping in the air and star-gazing. On his retirement from the service, he thought that he might as well confide to the public the marvellous results of his studies, and accordingly he brought out an astrological almanack with the imposing title of "Zadkiel's Almanack."

In this book the several stations of Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and other planets served to announce the dangers which in such or such a year or month threatened the most important personages in England, Lord Palmerston, Lord Brougham, &c., &c.

You might read there, for instance, "Nativity of Lord Palmerston.—There is room to fear that the country will be deprived of the noble lord's services when he has reached his seventy-eighth year. As we do not know the exact hour of his birth, an error of some months is possible; but if the noble lord arrives without hindrance at the middle of March, 1862, he will have against him a very fatal combination of adverse influences."

Prophecies made in this style of preciseness did not, as you may imagine, expose the prophet to great hazards. He had foretold the death of Lord Brougham; so at least it was believed. Lord Brougham, however, having made up his mind not to die; and the prophet, being thereupon taken to task, replied, "I have never foretold the death of anyone; I have only foretold that at such a period such a personage might be in danger of death." This was not exposing himself too far to be contradicted by the event. The stars are goodnatured.

Zadkiel's Almanack—need I tell you?—kept making its way.

> "Si *Peau d'âne* m'était conté,
> J'y prendrais un plaisir extrême."

But the success of his almanack did not satisfy the ambition of the prophet.

Among other miracles wrought by Cagliostro in the eighteenth century, there is quoted the following:—He placed a glass decanter before a little orphan girl of his acquaintance—children

are innocent, and innocence is needed in this sort of operation—and then said, "See what you see." Whereupon the little innocent never failed to see through the decanter all kinds of extraordinary scenes that went on, some in the present time, but in far countries, others in the future. Good traditions are never lost: this one survived. The celebrated Lady Blessington, among many curiosities of the same kind, owned a crystal globe, which, on the sale of the Gore House furniture, was transferred to the shop of a dealer in old lumber. It was there that Zadkiel discovered the sacred object, which he hastened to acquire for himself; and, as he had a son and a nephew, both young, and both endowed with souls pure enough to encourage Orion to favour them with the most precious revelations, the crystal globe, under their gaze, wrought wonders. In it they saw Mother Eve, they saw Titania mounted on a chariot, they saw the Apostles, especially St. Luke, though no one could tell why St. Luke was so eager to show himself. Among the most striking of these apparitions was that of Judas Iscariot. Zadkiel's Almanack gave the following account of this remarkable fact: "Judas Iscariot appears. He is very unhappy. He has sold Jesus Christ. He is in Hell. He wants to come out of the crystal. He will be happier after Sunday next."

This shows you that in the crystal globe alluded to the apparitions talk, and you will certainly ask me if they are heard talking. For that matter, no: strips of paper on which the words are written come out of their mouths; that is all. You would be glad too, I imagine, to learn in what language they express themselves. In answer to questions on this point Lieutenant Morrisson has formally averred that the mother of mankind expressed herself in English. It is also the language used by Titania, who is, therefore, pretty much what Shakespeare described her. And St. Luke? That question was one of the highest interest, the ascertaining in what language St. Luke's Gospel was written having been the subject of a controversy unfinished even at the present day. Thank heaven and Lieutenant Morrison, this problem is one no more: in the globe of crystal St. Luke spoke nothing but English.

But even at this distance I hear you crying out almost in anger, "How does this idle talk concern us?—Of what use all this?" Of what use? Listen. It all forms part of the history of the nineteenth century; for you are greatly deceived if you fancy that

these amazing puerilities have merely brought upon the stage the credulity of a few men devoid of culture, and of a few old idiotic women. By no means, if you please. Lord Harry Vane, Lord Effingham, the Venerable Archdeacon Robinson, the Bishop of Lichfield, Lady Egerton de Tatton, the Marchioness of Aylesbury, Lord William Graham, Lord Wilton, Colonel Phipps, Lady Errol, Baron Brunow,

"J'en passe, et des meilleurs,"—

such are the persons who cannot live without assuring themselves of the wonderful properties of the crystal globe. Thank you, bold Admiral Belcher! What a service has your sailorlike rudeness done to history! If, in attacking Zadkiel in the *Daily Telegraph*, you had not been drawn into an action at law, we should never have known how far credulity could go in the fashionable world. Admiral Belcher had publicly charged the author of Zadkiel's Almanack with imposture: in order to rebut the charge, and to prove that he showed the crystal *gratis*, Lieutenant Morrisson summoned as witnesses the personages whose names I have just given: a happy circumstance, to which we owe this amusing and instructive revelation! They would gladly have withdrawn their names from the light of publicity, and would have succeeded in doing so if for that end they had only to reckon on the obligingness of the *Times;* but other journals thought, with reason, that it was no more the mission of the press to hide the weaknesses than the faults of the great, whenever those weaknesses fall naturally under its powerful jurisdiction.

Among the incidents of the trial was one which I ought not to forget. A lady of a certain age on being asked what she had seen in the crystal, replied, "I saw a man clad in armour, with a helmet on his head; and near him was a lady in a rose-coloured garment, and her head was resting on the warrior's shoulder." You may imagine the roar of laughter there was. She was asked if she knew who was the man in armour, on which she stated to have heard from Lieutenant Morrisson that he was "the spirit of the crystal." The laughter redoubled. "Are you a medium?" —"No; I have not that honour." (Great merriment). On Sergeant Ballantine's showing the mysterious globe to the lady in question, and inviting her to look into it, she said, indignantly, "It is too solemn a matter, sir."

Another lady, Lady Egerton de Tatton, deposed to having been assured that she had in the globe seventy guardian angels. "That is a good many," she had timidly remarked. "Oh!" straightway replied the wizard, "some people have many more."

Such, sir, are some of the things that go on in this nineteenth century, in London, the most intelligent city of one of the most intelligent countries in the world!

Nevertheless, if I may say so, I find great justice in the verdict of the jury, condemning Admiral Belcher to a fine of twenty shillings. The question, in fact, was to determine, not whether astrology was a science, and Zadkiel's prophecies had been fulfilled or not, and whether St. Luke had really honoured the crystal globe with his presence; but whether Lieutenant Morrisson had deserved the charge of imposture levelled against him. Now in that direction nothing has been proved, and the jury did not deem itself warranted in arguing from absurdity to knavery.

In order that the love of the wonderful might not retire with all the honours of war, the jury condemned the admiral to a quite insignificant fine; but it condemned him, after all, in order to maintain the right of every man to be absurd. Nothing could be wiser than such a judgment. Good heavens! Where on earth should we be if the fact of being foolishly credulous were enough to incur the reputation of a liar.

How many things, moreover, which were at first turned to ridicule, have come at length to be accepted as so many unanswerable truths! How often has the fool of yesterday become the philosopher of the morrow. The one thing needful is that thought, however extravagant, should be protected, not only against all material persecution, but even more against all moral persecution, In order that none may deny us the liberty of being right, let us enjoy the liberty of being wrong.

LETTER CLXXII.

WHERE THE ENGLISH SEE DANGER.

5th July, 1863.

"WHAT should we gain by waging war on Russia, and what losses should we not risk incurring thereby?" Such is the sentence on almost every lip here—in the drawing-rooms of the

aristocracy, in the meetings of men of business, in the clubs—wherever politics are measured with any other compass than that of absolute justice.

There have been some gatherings, indeed, at which the trumpet was sounded in a very resolute manner; and if we might judge of the warlike temper of England by the meeting lately held in St. James's Hall, with Sir John Shelley in the chair—a meeting at which six representatives of the working class of Paris, who ran over expressly, were present—people here are only waiting the signal to advance. Unhappily the meetings in question are meetings recruited from the workshops; and in England—aristocratic England—it is not the opinion of the workshops which decides the destinies of the nation. What is the feeling of the governing classes? That is the one point needful to know.

Well, if I mistake not, the feeling of the governing classes is:—

That for England the real danger lies on the banks of the Seine—not on the banks of the Neva;

That if it be important to keep an eye on St. Petersburg, it is still more important to keep an eye on Paris;

That the humbling of Russia would be the exalting of France;

That between Poland and France there exist sacred ties, ties henceforth impossible to break, which would become still more so if the former were to owe her deliverance to the victorious arms of the latter;

That Poland reëstablished would consequently be at once the most splendid and the most solid of the conquests won by French influence;

That England having, by the Treaty of Paris, in March, 1856, abandoned the right of search, her main resource for taking Russia by the throat, she ought, in such a war referred to, if she let herself be drawn into it, to expect to play an inferior part, humiliating to her flag;

And lastly, that if Prussia made common cause with Russia, as one might foresee her doing, England would prove to have lavished her gold and disturbed her trade in order to help the bayonets of the Second Empire in bristling up along the Rhine.

The *Times* also goes near to represent the whole affair as a French plot, and its arguments come back in the main to setting Raton on his guard against Bertrand.

True enough, that the *Morning Post* even now finds fault with

that. Lord Palmerston's journal, in an attempt at raillery, reproaches the *Times* with wishing to fall asleep like the Beauty in the Wood, without dreaming of the inevitable moment when that slumber will be interrupted by the Beast. But what is the *Morning Post's* conclusion?

It dreads war as much as the *Times*, though with less reluctance to undergo its horrors, if fate happened to say the word.

A rumour is abroad that the agreement on the Polish question between Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell is not perfect—the First Minister, they say, regarding the likelihood of war with a coolness wanting in the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The article published in the *Morning Post* for to-day would tend to prove that those rumours are not unfounded. But the argument by means of which the *Morning Post* fights against the policy of abstinence is characteristic:—"The alliance with the French Government," it says, "gives us the right and the power of control, whereas, if we hold aloof we might easily lose the right of intervening at the last moment to put a check on arrangements perchance most disagreeable and highly disadvantageous to England."

Thus, at the bottom of the thought even of those who would not ask to be isolated from France, there is a deep distrust of the French Government; and if they resign themselves beforehand, in the event of an appeal to force, to encounter along with it the risks of war, it is chiefly in order to be the better prepared to hold it in, and, if need be, to shackle it.

In reality, I think that England, the England of the governing classes, is distressed at the turn which matters have taken, owing to the uncertain and contradictory policy of Lord Russell. The sentence which sums up all the criticisms which it is allowable to point and which are pointed at this policy, is that of Mr. Horsman—"We have done too much, or else we have not done enough." All that was likely to exasperate Russia has been said by Lord Russell; all, too, has been said that was likely to embolden her. He knitted his brows, while protesting his invincible dislike to a quarrel. He uplifted his arm, while avowing his firm resolve not to strike. Bold and timid, threatening in the premises and humble in the conclusions, he has asked nothing of Russia which he has not himself encouraged her flatly to refuse. Can he be astonished if this strange medley of haughty demands and over-peaceful declarations has raised beyond measure

the pride of the Russian people—if the reports that reach us from Russia show us the inhabitants of the capital and of the provinces asking for arms, the volunteers assembling, the priests blowing up the flame of a wild patriotism, and the Government presuming on the zeal that inflames men's minds to take high ground with the intervening Powers? Singular circumstance! The very Power which it was proposed to place under the influence of a threat seems now to be the one that threatens. The parts are reversed. Such are thy strokes, Diplomacy!

What adds to the imbroglio, is the opposition which the idea of intervention meets with among the Poles themselves—ay, especially among the Poles.

What they ask, in fact, is, that no one will aid their oppressors directly or indirectly, with or without a mask, against themselves. What they need is certainly not a fresh acknowledgment of those Treaties of Vienna which legalised the robbery of Poland, with the connivance of official Europe, and through which violence on a large scale became part of the public law of nations.

"Let the Governments which had a hand in the Treaty of Vienna declare solemnly, declare in concert, that, this treaty having been violated, they withdraw, so far as we are concerned, the sanction they had given; we wish for nothing more." Thus did Prince Zamoyski express himself at the meeting in St. James's Hall.

And that is the course which England also would like her Ministers to follow. But is it not too late for that now? There are fatal conjunctures, and the *Times* doubtless was of that mind when it said some time ago—"If we go forward, there is war; if we draw back, dishonour."

LETTER CLXXIII.

THE JUDGMENT OF "PUNCH" ON MR. ROEBUCK.

12th July, 1863.

I GAVE you an account of the Zadkiel law-suit; Zadkiel has been honoured with a caricature. This is the manner of it. The last number of the English Charivari, *Punch*, represents, under the name and the wizard garb of Zadkiel, a man whose gestures

and smile are satanic, holding under his arm a roll of paper on which are written these words—"Secrets of kings, queens, and emperors." Before him are two men of small stature and very frank air: one is Lord Russell; the other, with a college cap on his head, is Mr. Gladstone. Both are looking most attentively into the crystal globe you know of. "Well, my children!" asks the wizard Zadkiel, "what do you see?" Whereon Mr. Gladstone answers—"I don't yet see the recognition of the South." "And I," answers Lord Russell in his turn, "see in the crystal the image of our good old charlatan." A line written at the foot of the engraving informs the public that the likeness referred to is not that of Mr. Roebuck. You remember, do you not, the recent visit of Mr. Roebuck to the Tuileries, and what that indiscreet personage went so far as to say in the midst of the House of Commons?

Still more amusingly characteristic is the engraving brought out in the last number of *Punch*, and which, displayed in every newsman's window, attracts the notice and provokes the laughter of every passer-by. It represents the French Emperor seated in an arm-chair, his body bending forwards. In his hand is a cup full of those little sweetmeats which in England are called *humbugs*. You should know that the English word "humbug," so hard to render into French, means charlatanry, foolery, bouncing, or something of that sort. Mr. Roebuck, in the shape of a little dog, is sitting up like a well-trained dog on his hind paws, in front of his Majesty, who amuses himself by gorging the imprudent poodle with *humbugs*. Standing up and leaning over the back of the chair, the Empress looks on at the scene; but at length, in her compassion for the poor beast, she says to her husband—"Louis, dear! don't stuff him with any more sweetmeats. It is really cruel of you."

Now, if you consider that of all English journals *Punch* best expresses the popular feeling on any given question, you will know exactly what is thought in England of the parts severally played by Napoleon and Mr. Roebuck in the famous interview of which the latter has spoken so much, and so superfluously.

The fact is, that in that affair Mr. Roebuck committed a fault which will not be forgiven him for a long time.

No one certainly, at least among the governing classes, would have felt annoyed with him for proposing to recognise the South; and strangely as such a proposal might come from a man who so

long set himself up for a Liberal, however deep the gulf it was likely to dig between himself and his proper party, it would anyhow have won him the cheers and the praises of the aristocracy, if he had confined himself to that point. But no, he would enact the travelled diplomatist; he, who had begun by winning the repute of a blunt-spoken tribune, wanted to breathe the air of a palace, to talk with sovereigns, to question their thoughts, to receive their confidences.

Already had his old friends heard him, with an amazement mingled with sorrow, avow himself an Austrian, after he had been admitted to pay his court to the Emperor of Austria. Judge of their indignation when he became all but converted to Bonapartism, because the Emperor of the French had granted him the honour of an audience! He did not feel himself quite at his ease, it seems.

"Quoi! vous l'avez vu, grand'mère!
Quoi! vous l'avez vu!"

Still, if ever man insulted Napoleon, it was Mr. Roebuck; and to that Mr. Bright alluded the other day in scorching phrases.

When Mr. Roebuck appeared before the French Emperor and bowed almost to the ground before him, according to the usual custom, Napoleon for his part may well have laughed as he said to himself, "This is the man who, in the English House of Commons, asserted that a kiss from me on the cheek of Queen Victoria was pollution!"

He has been well avenged, however, if it be true that after confiding to Mr Roebuck the steps he would take to induce England to recognise the South, he encouraged him to acts of indiscretion by giving him authority to speak out and to hide nothing. This Mr. Roebuck did not fail to do, and there he is, fast in the mud.

My readers will remember the case at issue. In the sitting of the 30th June, Mr. Roebuck, giving account of an interview he had had with the Emperor of the French, in company with Mr. Lindsay, formally declared that he had learned from Napoleon the fact of a despatch having lately been sent to the Cabinet of St. James's, which despatch was intended to ascertain its views touching the recognition of the South. According to Mr. Roebuck, Napoleon had added that this was all he could do; that, as

for any direct, peremptory proposal, he must refrain therefrom, seeing that a proposal of this kind formerly made by him had, without his knowledge and against his wish, been communicated to Mr. Seward; an improper proceeding to which he would not expose himself a second time.

Yes, this it was which Mr. Roebuck, on the 30th of last June, avowed himself, on the faith of Mr. Roebuck, to have heard the French Emperor say; and this it was which Mr. Layard, in the sitting of the 2nd July, proceeded in the name of the ministry to deny:—He affirmed that the English Government had never received any other despatch on the recognition of the South, than that which was read in November of last year; that no copy was left of that despatch; that far from its having been made known to Mr. Seward by the English ambassador Lord Lyons, it had been communicated to Lord Lyons by Mr. Seward; that if it had been divulged, the blame lay with the *Moniteur* which was the first to publish it; that since then no communication to the same effect had been made to the Cabinet of St. James's.

In other words Mr. Roebuck saw himself in the position of one who had either put into the Emperor's mouth things which he had never said, or repeated things which he may indeed have said, but which were untrue. On this point, as you know, the *Moniteur* has spoken, and spoken in such a way as to let it be supposed that Mr. Roebuck's story is incorrect.

But that is not all. An impatient longing to inform the world that he, even he, Mr. Roebuck, had seen the gates of Olympus open before his approach, has led him to propose the recognition of the South at the most untimely moment that could be conceived.

Supposing, in fact, that the English Government was resolved to recognise the South, it could not do so without great folly in the present circumstances, since everything seems to indicate that in one way or another the question is on the eve of being decided in America without Europe having to meddle with it. What will be the result of the invasion of Pennsylvania by Lee, commander-in-chief of the Confederates? Is the balance of battles about to lean towards the side of the South or to that of the North? On that point we shall not long wait to be instructed; but one thing is certain, that we seem to be close upon some decisive issue, and that the hour of the great crisis

appears to be at hand. At such a moment the recognition of the South would be a mere piece of downright stupidity; for what would be England's position if, while she was preparing to send an ambassador to Richmond, Lee was being crushed? And if, on the contrary, victory should bring Lee in a few days to Washington, what ground would there be for the urgency of an interference which, in that case, would have the twofold disadvantage of being too hasty and too late?

There is therefore not a doubt that if Mr. Roebuck's proposal is submitted next Monday to the vote of the House of Commons, the day fixed for its discussion, there will be a majority against it. Hence, oddly enough, it has come to pass that the partisans of the South would gladly see the proposal withdrawn, to save them from voting against it, while the partisans of the North on the contrary would gladly see it sustained, so sure are they of its rejection.

This indeed was the point made manifest at the sitting of the day before yesterday. Mr. Fergusson, well known for his Southern sympathies, strongly adjured Mr. Roebuck to desist, for the sake of the very cause he burns to serve. And on the other hand Mr. Forster, one of the firmest partisans of the North, strongly insisted on the need of cutting this knot of the recognition with an Aye or a No, and that without delay.

But Mr. Roebuck has not only the cause of the South to plead; he has his own to plead also, and he does not mean to let the occasion slip. His truthfulness has been put to a test whence he naturally looks to coming out victorious, inasmuch as he has for a witness his fellow-traveller, Mr. Lindsay. "Mr. Roebuck's story is quite true, *and is only too true.*" Thus did Mr. Lindsay express himself in the sitting of the day before yesterday. Need I bring out into relief the meaning and the force of that "*only too true*"?

Lord Palmerston, in his tender concern for the honour of crowned heads, dreads exceedingly the startling effect of a contradiction given to the *Moniteur*. His attempts last Friday to induce Mr. Roebuck to let the matter drop, were touchingly grotesque. So hard did he try to move Mr. Roebuck, that he kept on to nauseousness calling him "my honourable *friend*," dwelling loudly on the inconvenience of leading the Emperor of the French to repent of the courteous welcome he has been wont to give foreigners, and on insisting too much on what he might let

slip in the *unreserve* of conversation. But Mr. Roebuck, against whom the English press has for some days past been using up all its arrows, is not the man to offer himself as an expiatory victim. If he does speak, it will be very amusing.

LETTER CLXXIV.

EXPIATING A FAULT.

July 14th.

It is all over: Mr. Roebuck is become a man for concessions. *Tear 'em*, the redoubtable *Tear 'em*, has grown tame beyond recognition. Was Mr. *Punch* right by accident, when the other day he represented him in the character of a sweet little poodle prettily posed on his hind paws, and bolting with simple gluttony certain sweatmeats hard of digestion?

Before yesterday's sitting there were still some persons, of the class that disbelieves in sudden metamorphoses, whom nothing in the world would have induced to doubt the intractability of Mr. Roebuck's virtues. "He had a moment's weakness"—said they —"'tis true. Homer falls asleep, and the sun suffers eclipses; but wait, wait! You will see if Mr. Roebuck's truthfulness can be denied with impunity, and if he is disposed to let the lie be given him to his face by the *Moniteur* of the Empire. The less he has succeeded in his part of confidant, the greater the noise he will make in returning to his true vocation. Prepare for tragical explanations. Next Monday will be a great day."

Yes, thus spoke they who would not at any price give up believing in Mr. Roebuck.

And indeed last Friday's sitting seemed to justify them.

In that sitting Lord Palmerston had made unheard-of efforts to point out to Mr. Roebuck the danger of gainsaying the mighty ones of the earth; to show him the advantages and the heroism of forbearance; to convince him of the need for letting the matter drop. He had addressed him the warmest adjurations, in terms which would have touched a heart of stone. He had passed his hand over his back in a way so caressing as to seem irresistible. He never ceased calling him "my friend," "my honourable friend," "my honourable and learned friend." Vain

efforts! Mr. Roebuck had declared his truthfulness was on its trial; he had called the whole earth in evidence on that point: he owed it to the world not to let the smallest cloud rest in men's minds on the correctness of his assertions; and yesterday was the day on which the truth should become visible in the gleam of the lightnings.

It was therefore something to see the eagerness of the public yesterday, the 13th July, 1863. The House of Commons was crowded. People promised themselves such a charming scandal!

What shall I say? In human memory never was disappointment so great. Let the whole earth think what it pleases; but since Mr. Roebuck has frequented courts, he has learned the duty of reticence. Enough that the inexperience of the amateur diplomatist made him, on his return from Paris, commit a huge indiscretion; he does not mean to aggravate it by a vindication of his honour such as might prove unseemly in the Foreign Office world. Having committed the fault of speaking when it behoved him to be silent, he will repair it by being silent when he ought to speak.

Yesterday, therefore, if Mr. Roebuck spoke at all, it was merely to warn us that he would not speak. Not a word that fell from his lips bore on his interview with the French Emperor, that interview whose mysteries he had made such haste to disclose; not a word that fell from his lips could have given offence at the Tuileries or in the office of the *Moniteur*. The denials with which people here armed themselves so cruelly against him, met only with that majestic reserve in which the masters of our destinies are wont to wrap themselves. Will any one now say that he has not won his diplomatic spurs? Evidently he would still have the power to return to court, and he perceives what it is your duty to respect when you are anxious to appear in the Palace without risk of being told—in the words used by Mr. Lindsay—"The Emperor is not at home."

True that a great inconvenience is appended to this advantage. What weight will Mr. Roebuck's word have henceforward, if he himself holds it so cheap? But the important thing, I repeat, is that he shall not lose his right of admission into court; and when I venture to express that opinion, do you know on what I found it? On a very interesting narrative which Mr. Lindsay, his fellow traveller and introducer, was kind enough to offer us in yesterday's sitting

This is how, according to Mr. Lindsay, matters happened at the outset:—

It having been noised abroad that the Emperor of the French had changed his mind with regard to the recognition of the South, Mr. Roebuck, before moving that recognition in the House of Commons, wished to know exactly how far he could rely on the Emperor's inclinations. Informed of the personal relations between Mr. Lindsay and Louis Napoleon, he wrote to the former to ask if there were no means of ascertaining what of true or false was contained in the rumours people had spread about; adding that he, Mr. Roebuck, had a keen desire to see the Emperor, and assure himself at first hand of the truth. To him who remembers the language which Mr. Roebuck sometimes permits himself to use in the House of Commons concerning the Head of the State in France, the audacity of such a wish is something quite inconceivable. But let that pass. Mr. Lindsay, at Mr. Roebuck's request, inquired *by letter* on the point it was proposed to ascertain, and received a *written reply*, to the effect that the Emperor's ideas with regard to the recognition of the South had never altered, and that if Mr. Roebuck came to Paris he would be received with pleasure. Mr. Lindsay sent this answer to Mr. Roebuck, informing him that he was authorised to mention it in the House of Commons if ever allusion should be made there to the report in question; to which Mr. Roebuck answered that a letter would not perhaps be sufficient; that he was anxious to assure *himself* of the fact, and that the House would believe him. In vain did Mr. Lindsay beg him to observe that an audience was no way needed; that the House would put faith in the contents of the letter, if it was read to it; Mr. Roebuck pressed his point. The sequel you know.

After that, is it not plain that Mr. Roebuck is tormented with an itching desire to enter into direct relations with sovereigns? Decidedly I have lost my faith in "peasants of the Danube."

To conclude, his noviciate will cost Mr. Roebuck dear; and already he may have a foretaste of the brotherhood that reigns among diplomatists. Lord Palmerston having called him last Friday "my honourable friend," "my honourable and learned friend," he deemed it his duty—so quickly has he made himself conversant with the usages of the great world—to render to Lord Palmerston politeness for politeness, and he accordingly declared

that he withdrew his motion "under the influence of a feeling of rofound respect for the noble lord."

That is just what the "noble lord" was expecting. The motion once withdrawn, the nice handling prescribed by diplomatic usage became needless, and forthwith "the noble lord" read his "honourable and learned friend" the rudest lesson that scholar ever received at the hands of his master. "Know," he said, "that your conduct has been most irregular. The only sovereign from whom the British Parliament may receive a message is the Sovereign of the United Kingdom. When there is need for communications on the part of a foreign sovereign they should pass through the agency of the responsible ministers for the Crown. If the Queen of England and the Emperor of the French have aught to tell each other, the Queen has an ambassador at Paris, and the Emperor an ambassador in London." This, you see, was cruel enough; but what think you of the following?—"Not to speak here of the constitutional question, which I consider very serious, when the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Paris, or my noble friend at the head of the Foreign Office, have to communicate with a foreign country, that communication is made by a responsible person, who is bound to take care that what he advances is a faithful reproduction of the communication entrusted to him, so that no doubt may possibly be raised as to the authenticity of such a declaration. But this is not the case with private persons, and I insist on the irregularity of the proceeding in question, in order that it may not form a precedent."

Behold what an amateur diplomatist is like to win, when he takes a fancy for treading on the heels of diplomatists by profession!

Thus, after being sharply assailed by nearly all the papers, and made a butt for the quips of Mr. *Punch*, Mr. Roebuck received the finishing-stroke from his "friend" Lord Palmerston, who, to crown all, delivered the aforesaid reprimand in the midst of great cheering.

All this—and I am one of those who were originally attracted by the character and the talents of Mr. Roebuck—has not caused me much vexation. It affords the wholesome lesson, that a bad cause brings misfortune to those who embrace it, and that justice avenges herself on those who forsake her worship.

LETTER CLXXV.

HALTING POLICY OF THE ENGLISH GOVERNMENT IN THE POLISH QUESTION.

July 22nd.

"I HAVE a presentiment that this little island will astonish the world," wrote Jean Jacques, talking of Corsica at a time when Corsica filled no larger a place in history than on the map. And the same Jean Jacques it was who foretold of the Powers guilty of having *swallowed* Poland, that *they never would digest her*. The former of these prophecies has been fulfilled, and we are looking on at the fulfilment of the second.

What will be the end of that impossible assassination, the assassination of Poland? Europe on this point labours under a bewilderment whose tragically tormenting character is but the fitting expiation of a crime almost as black on the part of those Governments that had the cowardice to permit it, as on the part of those that had the impudence to perpetrate it.

We have it at last, the answer so impatiently expected from Russia; and it does but deepen the surrounding darkness, while we look out for the flashes of lightning. Do not ask what effect it has produced in England. Why, what other feeling could it have aroused than one of deep humiliation?

Earl Russell argued as a preliminary measure the proclaiming of a truce: no truce, answers Prince Gortschakoff.

Earl Russell proposed a conference of the eight Powers that signed the treaty of Vienna; the notion of such a conference Prince Gortschakoff has haughtily repelled; and in its stead he proposes the establishment of a cordial understanding between Russia, Prussia, and Austria, thus admitting to a final settlement of the fate of the prize in question none but the vultures who are sharing it between them, and who have not yet succeeded in devouring the whole of it.

About the six points there is no difficulty. The Russian diplomatist, in terms of polite irony, declares they are quite in keeping with the purposes, already manifested, of his august master; letting it in a manner be understood that only for that reason are they deemed acceptable at St. Petersburg.

Apparently, however, if not in reality, it is quite certain that Prince Gortschakoff grants more than he rejects; and further, he rejects those points the granting of which would only have served to complicate the question.

Nobody here ever viewed the proposals of a truce in a serious light. Earl Russell almost avowed that a truce was impracticable, and such, you know, was Austria's opinion also. On that point it was generally considered that a truce, however possible, would be fatal to the Poles, a slumbering insurrection being as good as dead. Russia, therefore, has in all likelihood rejected this clause merely from a feeling of wounded pride; the Czar is unwilling to recognise *rebels* as belligerents; and the theoretic inconveniences of such a measure conceal from his eyes its practical advantages.

It is also a feeling of this nature which seems to have led him to reject the proposal for a conference of the eight Powers that signed the Treaty of Vienna; for what had Russia practically to fear from the results of a conference whose aim, announced beforehand, was simply to specify the conditions on which the asserted rights of the Autocrat of the North over Poland would receive a new and solemn consecration from Europe? And then, in a congress where Prussia would have been as one with Russia, how could any debate have been raised on the latter's domination over Poland without bringing more or less into question the domination of Austria over Hungary and Venice? Can you imagine the position of Austria, courteously invited to prevent disorder in her own house before trying to re-establish order in another's?

The truth is, that if Russia had granted all, absolutely all, that was asked of her, the position would have been no better. Far otherwise: it would have been worse; in this way, that it would have given Russia the opportunity to say,—

"I have done, you see, all that you desired. If the Poles are still bent on asserting their independence, if they do not immediately lay down their arms, if they will not bend the knee with a good grace before my sovereignty, if they will not swear homage and allegiance to their gracious constitutional king, the fault will be theirs; and you will be bound in honour to join with me in bringing them to reason."

I should like to know what the intervening Powers could have said in answer to such language, and how they would have shirked the logical necessity of furnishing Russia with gendarmes, in the

event of her not being able to carry out the work of butchery by herself!

Surely it was very kind of her to spare them such a perplexity!

Thus, whichever way the matter turned, the question had been so put by diplomacy that a satisfactory issue was impossible. And it is sad as well as strange that everybody, at least in England, should have said as much beforehand: the press, the House of Commons, the ministers themselves, beginning with Lord Russell. No, I know of no other example in history of a great country doing deliberately what it knows to be absurd, insisting on what it declares useless; proclaiming far and wide the right of a people to independence, and appealing *on their behalf* to the very treaties that robbed them of it; acknowledging from past experience that those treaties cannot be observed, and yet demanding their observance in the future; dictating conditions and warning the objects of that dictation that it rests with them alone to reject the conditions; almost commanding, and yet repeating to nauseousness that it cannot and will not enforce obedience.

Such are the difficulties that spring up when, not having the face to league with or to put up with justice, people have not the courage to be entirely just, to be just without looking too carefully at the cost!

No doubt that, in presence of the atrocities committed by Russia in Poland, entire forbearance on England's part would have been a shame: and so Lord Russell the other day proved decisively in answer to Earl Grey. But, on the other hand, no doubt that, in making remonstrances which she avowed her resolution not to sustain by force, England provoked a refusal, and played pitch and toss with her dignity; and so Lord Grey proved no less decisively against Earl Russell. What are we to conclude, then, but that she should have dared to act rightly, since she could with safety neither abstain from acting nor act wrongly? "The remonstrances of great Powers"—lately said the *Saturday Review*—"are like arrows, which derive their power only from the strength of the arm that bent the bow."

Mr. Horsman's speech, in the sitting of the day before yesterday, was but the expansion, in powerful and vehement language, of this irrefragable truth. That the restoration of Poland is a problem hard of solution; that the solution of that problem involves some formidable issues; that a close connexion, which cannot be ignored, exists between Poland, Galicia, the Duchy of

Posen, &c.; that to the question of Poland's resuscitation there consequently pertain territorial considerations of the highest importance, and that such complications are too serious to be regarded lightly; such are the points which Mr. Gladstone studied to bring well into view. But no one disputes the significance of the question; what it concerns us to know is, whether the shortest and surest way has been taken to reach a solution which has become imperative. When the hour has struck for a great decision, any hesitation to meet the danger increases instead of diminishes it; it is not enough, for the prevention of dreaded complications, to demonstrate their gravity. "We have angered Russia: we have encouraged Poland; and in either case we have done too much, or have not done enough." To this rebuke of Mr. Horsman what answer could Mr. Gladstone make? None. And he made no answer. To be afraid of war, which is in fact the most horrible of all scourges, is perfectly right; but when has it ever been avoided by dreading it overmuch and letting that dread be seen? In this matter Lord Palmerston's cabinet has been walking in the steps of Lord Aberdeen's. Remember how weak at first was the protest which old Lord Aberdeen coughed forth, if I may so speak, against the encroachments of Russia on the road to Constantinople. Did the timid tone of that protest prevent the war? No; it helped, on the contrary, to bring it on. How much oftener do wars spring from fatal conjunctures than from the will of Governments! And they see but a short way before them who do not comprehend the *fatality*—in the meaning attached by the ancients to that word—that underlies this Polish insurrection, unsuppressed because it is insuppressible. The longer that men adjourn the European crisis, thence sure to issue, the more terrible is the suffering they must expect. If Mr. Gladstone does not think so, he should have told us his reasons, for that was the very point to clear up.

LETTER CLXXVI.

EUROPEAN AND ENGLISH SIDE OF THE POLISH QUESTION.

July 23rd.

Russia's answer to the notes of the three intervening Powers has naturally dissatisfied and humiliated England.

Even if the Court of St. Petersburg had granted gracefully without reserve all that was asked of it, the result would not have been at all satisfactory, so badly had the question been enunciated by diplomacy.

Had a truce been practicable, how would it have helped the Polish cause? A revolution checked, is it not a revolution lost? During a suspension of arms Russia would have had leisure to concentrate her forces, to bring into play the powerful means of organization at her disposal, to make ready for dealing one decisive blow. But Poland? Was it likely, moreover, that by accepting the six points the Poles would have renounced the hope of their independence, have lowered their flag before a fresh consecration of treaties which consummated the great crime of their enthralment, and have forfeited, perhaps for ever, the fruit of so many efforts, of so many sacrifices, of so much heroic blood heroically shed?

As for a conference between the various Powers that signed the Treaties of Vienna, for the purpose of decisively solving the question by taking the six points as a base, one cannot see either in what way it would profit the Poles, whom it would give over anew to the Czar on certain conditions already violated and always easy to violate; or how it would greatly harm Russia, who, strong in the support of the King of Prussia, and able to speak of Hungary and of Venice whenever Austria spoke of Poland, would, at the worst, have carried off from this second Congress of Vienna the immense benefit of a second and solemn investiture.

A very pretty part had been got up for Russia, to the end that she might grant everything without trouble; and if she has not done so, if she would not have a conference, if she has only accepted the six points as a repetition of the views already expressed by the Emperor himself, it is all owing, it seems, to pride

alone. Raise the Polish rebels to the rank of belligerents by declaring a truce? Never! Allow foreign Governments to meddle with the administration of a Russian province? Nonsense! To this pitch of arrogance has Russia come, thanks to that declaration of Earl Russell, repeated in all manner of tones, reproduced in every form, "Whatever may be Russia's answer, and whatever may happen, England will never go to war." Never was encouragement given to insolence with a levity more foolish, or followed by consequences easier to foresee.

England ought, then, to have expected to be humiliated; she did expect it. She has nothing further left her but resignation.

And mark that any change in the peaceful tendencies of the Cabinet of St. James's is very unlikely. Last Monday's sitting in the House of Commons made that plain enough. To the powerful, vehement, passionate speech in which Mr. Horsman sounded the trumpet, as it were, what answer gave Mr. Gladstone, speaking in the name and on behalf of the Government? He answered that the question turned on a problem whose solution was difficult, very difficult; that the restoration of Poland entailed the cession of Galicia by Austria, that of the Duchy of Posen by Prussia, and the emancipation of all the Russian provinces which, in 1815, did not form part of the Duchy of Warsaw; that such a remodelling of the map was "a gigantic vision;" that the end of an experiment of that sort was a European war, and that Earl Russell had faithfully expressed the thought of the Government when he said, "England will not go to war for Poland."

It is curious to compare this language with the anxieties and the policy of Lord Castlereagh at the Congress of Vienna. These may be found revealed in the correspondence just laid before Parliament concerning the secret negotiations of 1814 and 1815.

At the Vienna Congress the warmest desire of any displayed by Lord Castlereagh was the wish to see a proclamation of Poland's independence, *as she existed before the first partition.* Convinced that Russian encroachments could meet with no stouter barrier, and that Germany could have no better bulwark, he spared no efforts to bring Austria and Prussia over to his views. With Talleyrand's backing he succeeded, at first, to the extent of being empowered to speak in their name. Happily, too, Prince Metternich was not hard of persuasion, he who had been wont to talk of an independent Poland as *the necessary cushion*

Unluckily the Emperor Alexander was at the head of an immense and victorious army: he knew that; moreover, spoke incessantly of it, showed himself utterly fearless of a war, and seemed full of confidence in the logic of cannon-balls: Lord Castlereagh's policy he met with a proud, an invincible opposition, The sum of his arguments was, "There I am and there I stay; turn me out who dare!" Lord Castlereagh had to forego his favourite scheme, and then it was that, as a last resource, he fell back on a division of the Warsaw Duchy into three parts, one to be given to Russia, another to Prussia, and the third to Austria.

The Treaty of Reichenbach of the 27th June, 1813, and that of Töplitz of the 9th September, 1813, had this arrangement for their object, but not for their issue. The Czar, feeling himself strong enough to keep all, did not mean to content himself with a part. Prince Metternich, on his side, had the weakness to glide imperceptibly down the slopes of compromise, and ended by failing altogether in maintaining his convictions. As for the Prussian Minister, Prince Hardenberg, the motives that urged him to give way bear witness at once to the greatness of his sagacity and the depth of his cynicism. In a confidential memorandum, addressed to Lord Castlereagh on the 20th November, 1814, Prince Hardenberg expressed himself in these terms:—"The longer I reflect on it the stronger is my feeling that we shall do well to yield on the political question. I see in that course less of danger than of gain for the repose of Europe in general, and Russia's neighbours in particular. I reckon that the strength and power of Russia will be lessened rather than increased by the establishment of a Polish kingdom under the sceptre of one and the same sovereign. The Poles will enjoy privileges withheld from the Russians. Ere long the genius of either nation will begin a struggle with that of the other; their jealousies will hinder their union; embarrassments of all kinds will arise. . . . In short, I have a secret conviction that, in trying to keep the Emperor from reëstablishing the kingdom of Poland under his sceptre, we are working against our own interests."

Prince Hardenberg had a clear insight when he foretold that the forcible riveting of Poland to Russia would cause cruel embarrassment to the latter Power; but he was deceived in his selfish reckonings when he fancied that this embarrassment could be reconciled with the peace of Europe. His forecasts in this

respect are conclusively belied by the state of violent perplexity and agitation into which the Polish insurrection is at this moment plunging every nation.

Be that as it may, it was not owing to Lord Castlereagh that Poland was not reëstablished at that period in her ancient boundaries, and proclaimed independent.

True, that in this matter he was guided neither by lofty views of justice nor by the sympathy with which the sight of an oppressed people might inspire a virtuous soul. What he did consider in the Polish question was its European side—its bearing on the enlargement of the Russian power. Yet this European aspect it is which the English statesmen of to-day seem to have almost utterly overlooked; and this is the meaning of their absolute repugnance to run the hazards of a war, of which, as they imagine, the whole profit would accrue to Poland and to France.

In 1815 the Power which England feared most was Russia. Her recent acquisitions in Finland, in Bessarabia, on the Persian frontier; her persistent stretching of her arms towards Constantinople; the splendid part she had played in the tragedy of Napoleon's fall, all helped to surround her with a disquieting halo. Hence Lord Castlereagh's endeavours at first to set up—in the shape of a great, an independent Poland—a barrier strong enough to hem her in; and next, when that scheme had to be abandoned, to make her share of the spoils of Poland as small as possible. But in these days the Power whose movements England follows with anxiety is no longer Russia, but France. They choose to think here that, since the war in the Crimea, Russia no longer deserves the honour of being dreaded. Never had Mr. Urquhart better reason to bewail what he calls the blindness of his fellow countrymen. Mr. Horsman, to do him that justice, does not share the illusions on this point in which so many people are rocking themselves. "If Russia," he said in last Monday's sitting, "had had railroads, Sebastopol would not have fallen, and the present rising in Poland would not have lasted a month. Russia's weakness lies in her extent; but for her also steam and iron will soon have shortened distances, and then there is no reason why she should not be more formidable than ever."

So think some men of keen vision; but the common opinion, I repeat, is that the danger of to-day comes not from St. Peters-

burg. Was it not but lately that Lord Ellenborough went so far as to aver in the House of Lords that Russia's greatness was of consequence to the preservation of the balance of European power?

Don't be surprised, after this, if England declines, in any other way than that of protocols, to ally herself with France against Russia—with the Power, namely, whom she fears most against the Power she fears least. Besides that the results of the Mexican expedition, undertaken at first in concert, enlightened her as to the danger of certain military alliances, she does not care in any way to help to weaken a Power which, however wrongly in my opinion, she is accustomed to dread no longer, for the advantage of another Power which she is just now prone to dread overmuch.

In truth—and Mr. Horsman brought out this point the other day with much force—England could not, if the storm burst forth, hold herself aloof without abandoning to France a part that would be all the more conspicuous since there would be none to share the glory of it. Such, for England, is one of the difficulties of the situation.

LETTER CLXXVII.

SYSTEMATIC DISPARAGEMENT APPLIED TO THE FEDERALS.

July 25th.

The welcome given in England to the tidings of the great successes recently gained by the Federals would suffice to show, if that were needful in these days, in what direction flows the torrent of public opinion.

That news, I hasten to say, awakened transports of delight in the working classes, and in those organs of the English press which represent the generous side of the national tendencies. "It is with profound, passionate, and thankful satisfaction that we record the news of the victories which announce the approach of a happy peace." So speaks the *Morning Star;* and it rejoices in the protection granted to the arms of the Republic of the United States by the "God of mercy and of justice."

These words will awaken loud and numberless echoes in Lan-

cashire—in that Lancashire where, as Mr. Coningham lately showed in the House of Commons, no more than three or four meetings had been held in favour of the South, out of many hundreds to which the events in America have given occasion.

Unluckily, in a country like this, it is not by the heart-beats of the nameless crowd that public opinion, so called, is regulated. If you wish to know on which side blows the mighty wind of that *opinion* which governs all, you must place yourself on the top of the mountain, not in the plain. Now, in the upper regions never—no, never—was sympathy with the South proclaimed in a more striking manner than on the occasion of the recent advantages gained by the North.

The wave of a formidable invasion flung back; the fierce, the desperate charges of the Southern infantry broken at last, one after the other, against the immovable battalions of the Federal army; Lee, the most renowned of Confederate captains, giving way before Meade, a general whose name, but yesterday, was unknown in Europe; Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, out of danger; and the fortress of Vicksburg reduced to surrender; the command of the Mississippi won, and the dominion of the Confederates severed by force from the Western States on the very day when Lee was driven backward towards the Potomac—what can be imagined, if not more conclusive, at least more splendid and more momentous? Certainly, with such a picture before our eyes, it is easy to fancy how at New York enthusiasm has succeeded to dark forebodings; how the language of the Federal press breathes forth the pride of victory; how deputations have been sent to congratulate President Lincoln; how the premium on gold in the United States has fallen from 40 to 31; and how, taking advantage of the ardour of the people, the Washington Government has decreed a levy of three hundred thousand men.

Well, would you believe it? The English press, all but three or four journals, gravely announces that nothing has been done. Listen to the *Times*, for instance. The battle of Gettysburg is a drawn battle. `The field of battle remained, it is true, with the Federals; but what of that? Who knows? Perhaps Lee has fallen back to choose a more favourable line of attack. He is so clever a tactician! Besides, the question whether the invasion of Pennsylvania is an enterprise baulked depends on the question for what purpose it was undertaken. If, as we may suppose, the aim of the Confederate commander was merely to

live on the enemy's country while waiting for something better, and to return after a certain time laden with spoils, his retreat proves nothing except that his object was accomplished.

As for the taking of Vicksburg, that is a gleam of success; however, the Federals will not command the Mississippi so long as they do not hold Port Hudson. But where the *Times* seeks and finds consolation for the right-thinking is in the fact that the "*incidents*" of the campaign have presented President Lincoln and his chief Ministers in a *pitiable* light. Because General Halleck deems himself fortunate in having kept Grant in his command, the *Times* concludes that General Halleck ascribes to himself all the honour of taking Vicksburg, and it holds him up to the laughter of Europe. It cannot forgive President Lincoln for having been serenaded. It accounts Mr. Stanton criminal for not having been able to resist the temptation of discharging a shaft of satire at the champions of peace, the *Copperheads;* and as for Mr. Seward, the *Times*, on the faith of its correspondent, accuses him of comparing himself to Jesus Christ! In short, the leading journal of England will see nothing in these last triumphs of the North but the irrefutable proof of the degeneracy of statesmen on the other side of the Atlantic.

So much for the *Times;* but what shall I say of the *Morning Herald?* The journal of the Tories likewise disputes the success of the Federals with all its might, but in a tone of fury. To hear it, the war may last twenty years longer, and Mr. Seward is a fool if he thinks the South exhausted because Washington is out of danger, because Philadelphia is not yet in flames, and because in Baltimore the guns of Fort M'Henry overawe the Secessionist tendencies of the inhabitants. What enrages the *Morning Herald* is the idea that the next mail will bring from America news of a nature to confirm her hopes—an allusion to the refusal of the English Government to recognise the South. "Yes," exclaims that aristocratic journal, trembling with wrath, "but a few days more, and Mr. Seward will learn that he has still six or nine months left to finish his *fiendish work;* he will learn that we here have refused to speak the word which could bring peace to a continent and save perhaps the lives of fifty thousand men." How the recognition of the South would end the war instead of making it more dreadful, as many shrewd thinkers believe it would, the *Morning Herald* does not condescend to explain. It adds, in the wildness of its frenzy—

"They are sacrificing *the holiest of causes* to the interests of party. Lancashire must die of hunger that Lord Russell may keep his place." Here again the *Morning Herald* forgets to tell us by what kind of prodigy the recognition of the South could give bread to the working men of Lancashire. If that recognition did not lead to war with the North the blockade would continue, and there would be no more cotton after than before. If, on the contrary, war ensued with the North, the working men of Lancashire, who are short of cotton, would run the chance of being short of bread as well. But what think you of the *holiest of causes?* What! In such terms as these is the cause of slavery defined in England by an Englishman? O Wilberforce! would you know your country again if you came out of your grave?

I might extend yet further this woeful review of the organs of public opinion; I might bring under the reader's eye the thousand sophistries cherished by the English Press in its zeal to prove to all, and perhaps, alas! to itself, that the Federals are no further advanced to-day than yesterday, and that "*the holiest of causes*" still has every chance on its side. But I stop short in sorrow and disgust: in sorrow, for this strange way of observing neutrality on England's part accumulates a load of undying resentment in the heart of the Northerners, inclines them to turn towards Europe the points of their swords whenever they shall be able to manage the hilt according to their own desire, and thus prepares misfortunes of which the bare idea makes one shudder.

LETTER CLXXVIII.

ENGLISH DIPLOMACY IN A FIX.

July 25th, 1863.

The American and Polish questions divide between them the attention of the public in this country, without it being easy to say which of the two most excites the minds of men.

Yesterday the two Houses of Parliament received communication of a despatch in which Lord Napier, the English Ambassador, relates to Earl Russell the result of an interview which casts a somewhat troubled light upon the intentions and feelings of the Czar.

On the 18th of July, according to this despatch, Lord Napier proceeded to Tzarskoë-selo, in company with the French Ambassador, with the view of attaining, from the Russian Vice-Chancellor, explanations of a nature to soften the unfavourable impression which, in their opinion, the reply of Russia to the notes of the three intervening Powers could not fail to produce.

Lord Napier did not conceal from Prince Gortschakoff:

That this reply was likely to be regarded in England as a means of gaining time, and of detaching Austria from England;

That the proposition to remove two great Powers like England and France from the discussion of a question in which both the one and the other took such a lively interest would probably be taken as an insult, and would be far from appearing to have been conceived in a spirit of conciliation;

That a project tending to deliver the fate of Poland exclusively into the hands of the three Powers by whom she had originally been torn in pieces, and in former times oppressed, was not calculated to inspire confidence;

In a word, that in his (Lord Napier's) humble opinion, no answer could have been devised that would have contained fewer of the elements of an amicable and pacific solution.

Lord Napier then asked the Vice-Chancellor the two following questions:—

1st. What form and what manner of basis did Russia intend to give to the discussion between herself, Austria, and Prussia?

2nd. Did she mean to exclude France and England even from all participation in the ratification of the engagements which might be agreed upon by the three Powers?

In reply to the first question, the Vice-Chancellor explained that the plenipotentiaries of Austria and Prussia would be received by him in St. Petersburg, and that the results of the conference, as in the case of the Treaties of Vienna, could be set forth and accepted in common, either in the form of a protocol, or in that of a treaty, or in any other form that might be judged desirable; and that the starting-point of the discussion would be the six points, which contained nothing contrary to the views of the Emperor, without prejudice to such others as he might deem it his duty to submit for examination.

In reply to the second question, Prince Gortschakoff said that the resolutions agreed upon in the conference of the three neighbouring Powers more directly interested in the affairs of Poland,

would be officially communicated to the Governments of France and England, who would then be in a position to appreciate the conformity of those resolutions—bearing upon the practical realisation of the six points—with the spirit and text of the Treaty of Vienna.

The logical consequence of a strict adherence to the method pursued in the Treaties of Vienna would require that the results of the limited conference should be laid before a general convention, in which all the Powers bound by the engagements of 1815 would be invited to take part. Lord Napier begged the Vice-Chancellor to say, without ambiguity, if that was the light in which he viewed the matter. The latter, without absolutely declaring himself against such a conclusion, declined to accept it, and repeated several times that he would not accede to anything which should tend to recognise the right of the Western Powers to interfere with the internal affairs of the Russian Empire, in which empire he seemed to comprise the kingdom of Poland, &c.

When we look at this haughty attitude and peremptory language in the light of the military preparations of Russia, and of the savage enthusiasm which is said to inspire the population, it is difficult not to avow the work of diplomacy an abortion. And in what other result could it terminate? How could it be possible to reconcile interests which are radically irreconcilable? How could it be supposed that Russia would suffer any interference with what, especially since 1831, she has been pleased to regard as her own by right of conquest? How could it be imagined that the Poles, at the very moment when, seized with a heroic despair, they demand independence or death, would bend their necks in silence beneath the yoke of those treaties of Vienna which constitute the part shamefully taken by European diplomacy in the crime of their subjugation?

Accordingly, while statesmen were inditing despatches and dreaming of protocols, Poland's warlike energy waxed twofold greater; Russia passed from anger to fury; blood shed in assassinations mingled with the blood shed in battle; the two hostile peoples thought only of pressing each other in the embrace of death; and there yawned between them an abyss impossible to fill up, impossible to cross.

What is at this moment passing in Russia? All reports on that head agree only too well. The people, transported with fury, rush to arms; subscriptions for the war come pouring in; volun-

teers press forward with alacrity; the priests breathe into their souls the fire of a savage patriotism and preach a "holy war;" some thousands of men are employed in fortifying Cronstadt; the fiery impulse is said to be universal; armaments are being made on an immense scale.

All this is known to England, and all this occasions her inexpressible torture. Urged by Earl Russell's despatches along a path where, as she is fully sensible, she cannot draw back without compromising her dignity; she dreads, on the other hand, being plunged into a war the advantages of which are not apparent, and whose range she measures with a beating heart. What would this war bring about, supposing it were successful? The abasement of Russia? But the abasement of Russia, whom, since the fall of Sebastopol, the English have ceased to fear, would be the elevation of France, which alone at the present day disquiets the English. They are not blind to the increase of force which reconstituted Poland would confer upon France, beneath whose banner she fought so long, whose triumphs and reverses she so fully shared, who calls her sister, and, indeed, loves her as one. Is it for that England should give her money and her blood? And if it happened that Prussia, by entering the lists, should offer Napoleon the so-long-coveted opportunity of seizing upon the left bank of the Rhine? There is not a single politician here to whose mind such considerations have not occurred. "England has no interest in a war of this kind, and would run incalculable risks." Such is the phrase that is in every mouth, whether in private circles or in clubs, wherever politics are not an affair of pure sentiment. Take up the newspapers; how many of them are there who are decidedly in favour of war? I could scarcely name one. Is it not worthy of remark that, whether in the House of Lords or in the House of Commons, not a single orator has ventured as yet to declare for war clearly and decidedly, even among those who have displayed the greatest vehemence in denouncing the woes of Poland, in stigmatising the cruelties of the Russian soldiery, in condemning the vaccillating conduct of the Ministry and their pusillanimous confessions, in recommending energy as a mark of wisdom.

It is true that warlike meetings have been held. Last Wednesday, for instance, St. James's Hall was the scene of an enthusiasm the character of which was undoubtedly bellicose. That the appearance of General Count Zamoyski should have

been wildly cheered, was simple enough; but that was not all. Sir John Shelley, a member of Parliament, occupied the chair. He said that he had been asked what would be the use of that meeting, and if it were resolved to go as far as war. That question was responded to by a formidable "Yes." Six French working men were there, who had come over from Paris to give to the character of this manifestation the idea of a military and popular alliance with France,—Messieurs Perrachon, mounter in bronze; Aubert, a mechanic; Tolain, engraver in bronze; Murat, silk weaver; Bibal, shirtmaker; Cohadon, mason,—whose presence contributed not a little to the effect of that "Yes" which rose so quickly from the hearts to the lips of those present. But in England it is not the people, properly so called, who decide the destinies of England. The thought of the aristocracy and of the statesmen, who are the incarnation of the will of the governing classes, is the true barometer to consult when you wish to know if the weather is likely to be stormy.

For the rest, there are situations which depend upon fate. If the governing classes in England have no wish to undertake a war conjointly with France, neither do they wish that Napoleon should go to war without England; and it is not impossible that they might be brought to resign themselves to the former inconvenience in order to avoid the latter. It seems to me quite certain that, if the signal be given, it must proceed not from Downing Street, but from the Tuileries.

LETTER CLXXIX.

A MAN WHO WAS CALLED "HONOURABLE."

July 29th, 1863.

Do you remember that, eleven months ago or thereabouts, I related to you a frightful drama, the hero of which was one William Roupell? A sorry hero, in good sooth! This William Roupell, still young, endowed with good parts, and who had the rare privilege of exercising a marked ascendency over every one who came near him. He dazzled the town with the splendour of his expenditure. He kept mistresses, horses, and lackeys. He made an excellent figure in clubs and drawing-rooms. He

had a seat in Parliament, where he represented one of the most considerable electoral divisions of London. One fine morning this man appeared at the Guildford Summer Assizes, voluntarily, spontaneously, with a view to say in substance :—

"I am a thief. I am a forger. While my father lived, I abused in an infamous manner the unlimited confidence which he placed in me. I succeeded, by imitating his signature, in selling or mortgaging valuable estates, the proceeds of which I was thus able to dispose of at my leisure. When my father was nigh unto death, I stole his will, not two steps from his deathbed, and by the aid of a forgery I replaced it by another by which I gave everything to my mother, because my influence over her ensured me the absolute enjoyment of all. As the property which I sold or mortgaged did not belong to me, those who now fancy that they possess good titles, hold in reality nothing but scraps of paper. The lawful proprietor of what they fancy they have purchased is my brother Richard, heir to my father, Palmer Roupell."

In fact, it was in support of the title claimed by Richard to an estate mortgaged by William that the latter came to read to the terrified judges the long list of his crimes.

Never, since trials were introduced into this world, has a more singular one been seen.

Before the counsel for the *bonâ fide* purchaser could save the fortune of his client, it would be necessary for him to prove that William Roupell was not the forger he pretended to be.

And, on the other hand, before Richard could gain his cause, it was necessary that William should furnish a clear, conclusive, decisive demonstration of his own infamy.

To render this demonstration irrefutable, an impassioned ardour was displayed by William Roupell. He gave evidence of an astonishing memory. He exhibited, in order to cover himself with shame, extraordinary resources of intellect and of argumentative power. His precision was fearful. He allowed nothing to escape him. He had forgotten nothing. To every denial of the adverse counsel he opposed a proof. "Ah! you pretend that I am not a guilty wretch! Well, what have you to say, then, to this fact, or to this other one, or again to this other? What! you still deny it? Well then, I swear!"

The punishment for which the poor wretch seemed to thirst was accorded to him; and without visible regret, without

apparent emotion, he exchanged the honours of his parliamentary position for the horrors of penal servitude—the pleasures and the triumphs of the man of the world for the opprobrium of a convict's life.

What was the motive that had induced him thus to deliver himself up to justice?

Remorse for having robbed his own family? But it was not in his power to restore his family to the possession of the property of which he had fraudulently disposed, without consummating the ruin of those who had dealt with him. It was not a reparation for his robberies—it was only an alteration in their effects, simply a change of victims. It is true that by so doing he snatched his relatives from ruin, while dealing ruin to strangers. But as regards his relatives, he had begun by deceiving them, by robbing them. Under the influence, then, of what sentiment, of what line of thought, had he since been brought to desire to repair his wrong-doing towards them, by calling down upon his own head such a terrible punishment, by incurring such infamy? How could a repentance of such prodigious energy, a devotedness so absolute, find place in the heart of an egotist without bowels?

Is it possible to suppose that, with the sole object of restoring to his family their vanished splendour, he had accused himself of imaginary wrongs, had charged himself with forgeries which had never been committed, had blackened himself with all sorts of crimes, invented, linked together, framed, and rendered probable with the art of a novelist of the highest order? Even in that case this hero of filial love would have been an odious rascal; this heroic brother would have been a villain, seeing that his filial love and his fraternal devotion would have consisted in despoiling a third party by dint of falsehoods and perjuries.

Had William Roupell some powerful motive to act as he did, reconcilable with the supposition of a nature profoundly egotistic, profoundly perverse, and, which it is only impossible to guess from ignorance of certain facts which would need to be known? Or was his conduct only another chapter to be added to your mysterious history, ye contradictions of the human heart? All the world was lost in conjectures.

Well, William Roupell has just been brought back upon the scene; and this second trial, which disputes public attention with the affairs of Poland and the struggles of the new world,—this

second trial only makes the darkness still more dense with respect to the point that needed light.

While his father was yet alive, William Roupell, being in want of £12,000, bethought him, as one mode of procuring that sum, of mortgaging two estates belonging to the old man and let, the one for £250, the other for £70 a year. To advance upon such security so considerable a sum as £12,000, nobody would ever think of doing. How did William Roupell manage? He first of all substituted for the genuine leases forged leases, in which he raised the rents respectively from £250 to £500, and from £70 to £170. It still remained to satisfy the lenders that the estates intended to secure the loan really belonged to the borrower. For a man of William Roupell's mould, this difficulty was as nought. On perusing a letter represented as coming from his father, but which was written by his sister and dictated by himself, a solicitor named Walker prepared a deed of gift that transferred to the son the ownership of the property to be mortgaged, and at the foot of which figured his father's signature. Some time afterwards the old man died, and, armed with the deed of gift, William Roupell obtained from the Messrs. Freeman the £12,000 he wanted.

The question at present is whether the signature affixed at the foot of the deed of gift be genuine, in which case the Messrs. Freeman's title will hold good; or whether it be a forgery, as William Roupell affirms, in which case the estates belong to Richard, as heir-at-law to Palmer Roupell.

Thus a second time has been presented to the world that singular interchange of parts which was beheld on the former occasion. Summoned in quality of witness, William Roupell has sworn that he committed a forgery, and those who are interested on the other side have striven to prove that he was innocent of the crime of which he accused himself. "I am a forger, but not a perjurer," was the theme developed by the witness. "You are a perjurer, not a forger," was the theme developed by the adverse party.

During these pleadings, which took place at Chelmsford, the attitude of William Roupell has been not less incredible than all the rest of the affair. It was assuredly no longer the brilliant man of former times. Beard and moustaches had fallen beneath the razor; the hands had ceased to be accustomed to gloves; the elegant millionaire had disappeared. But beneath the

burden of his shame the unhappy man held himself as upright as in old times; his face betrayed no emotion; the words trembled not upon his lips. It was with the calm of an indomitable resolution that he consummated the task of his lingering suicide. There was one moment, one single moment, when his strength gave way. When his sister Sarah slightly touched him on her way to the witness-box, he fainted away and had to be carried out. Up to that moment the sympathy of the public had been all for the adverse party, but that feeling was now combated by a rapid and involuntary movement of pity which Mr. Bovill, counsel for the Messrs. Freeman, rather prolonged than checked, by inferring from this scene that some dark secret probably existed between brother and sister.

Another scene, not less touching and mysterious, took place when Mrs. Watts, sister-in-law of the late Palmer Roupell, declared that she was proud of being connected with William Roupell, notwithstanding his "misfortunes," and fell into a violent attack of hysteria after exclaiming: "His father was accustomed to say that he would one day be a great man, and he is one, he is one!"

In fact, nothing has been wanting to the darksome interest of this affair, not even the indistinct, silent, and appalling figure which, in certain dramas, suffers its action to be divined while hardly allowing its presence to be seen. Only in the present instance this *rôle* has been shared between Mr. Watts, the witness's uncle, who did not appear, and a solicitor, whom both parties seemed equally afraid to call upon to give evidence.

A signature required to be verified. Experts were consulted; the evidence was anxiously sifted, and carefully weighed; but all in vain, for Truth has not issued from her well.

People asked how it was that the solicitor who prepared the deed of gift never thought at that time of satisfying himself as to the genuineness of the signature by calling upon and questioning the donor, seeing that he was still alive. They also ask, as they look upon all the circumstances since revealed, how it was that William Roupell was able, during the lifetime of his father, who was a miser and had a miser's lynx-eyes, to dispose by means of forgeries of such large amounts of money without the latter ever having the slightest suspicion?

Be that as it may, the jury, after a first consultation of three hours, came into court to declare the absolute impossibility of

their arriving at any sort of decision. Being invited by the judge again to retire into their private room, they remained there till the evening, when the result was a formal declaration that the jurors could not agree, and that there was no chance of their agreeing, even if they were locked up all night. They were accordingly dismissed, and things remain as they were.

Thanks to the money amassed by his father in a manner over which some clouds were called up by the ambiguous words of a witness, William Roupell had been welcomed and fêted in the world, had gained access to Belgravia, had obtained the suffrages of the Lambeth district, and so forth. Before he made himself the historian of his own history, he had ranked with the "honourables."

LETTER CLXXX.

HOW THE NEWS FROM AMERICA IS COMMENTED UPON IN ENGLAND.

August 3rd, 1863.

The riots which have lately stained with blood the streets of New York have for some days past given animation to the party that, in England, detests the North, supports the South, and sighs for the separation as a means of rendering for ever impossible the resurrection of the great republic of the United States. "Well," cry they with a triumphant air to those of the opposite party, "will you still assert that it is in the interest of the coloured race that the Union flag is displayed? Will you still deny the profound, or rather the implacable, hatred of the North for those poor slaves whose emancipation you are simple enough to believe the Federals are striving to achieve at the cost of so many sacrifices? The 'popular' movement which has just broken out in New York, the Unionist city before all, settles the question. It is clear that the 'people' in the North will have nothing to do with a war directed by the abolitionists, since it is taking up arms against the conscription intended to bring it to an end. It is clear that in the North, the 'people' is against the negroes, seeing that it is chiefly with the blood of the negroes that the rioters in New York have reddened the pavement."

A letter addressed to me from America by one of my friends, an eye-witness of the events, happens to supply a direct answer to this argument of the Southerners. Allow me to give you the substance of this letter, in which things are presented in their true light by a person who is on the spot, who has seen all, and is quite competent rightly to appreciate what he has seen.

When he landed in America on the 1st of July the army of the South was encamped at a post whence it threatened at the same time Washington, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. The Federals had just then come under the command of Meade, whose capacity as a general commanding in chief was hardly known to any one, and who had still to win his spurs. The army of the Potomac, so frequently beaten, might possibly sustain another defeat, in which case woe to the North; for what force remained to check the advance of Lee?

And yet, strange to say, one might have thought that New York had made up its mind to die gaily, if die it must. Like the banqueters in the citadel of Thebes, New York, its head crowned with flowers, seemed to say "*A demain les affaires sérieuses!*" The people crowded the theatres; the active hive of speculators buzzed more noisily than ever in Wall Street.

On the 4th of July, the anniversary of the great day of the Declaration of Independence, it was remarked in the Fifth Avenue, and thereabout, few flags were waving from the windows. The mob had filled the parks, apparently absorbed in the pleasure of listening to the music. In the town, towards evening, individuals, evidently moved by a hostile influence, began to throw crackers about, let off fusees, and fire off pistols, which had no other effect than that of wounding some inoffensive persons. The countenances of known democrats were radiant with joy. A gloomy sadness prevailed among the republicans, men of sense and reflection, before whose eyes no presumptuous confidence veiled the gravity of the situation.

There arrived news, startling, unexpected. Meade was victor. Lee had fallen back as soon as he became sensible that victory was escaping from his grasp, leaving upon the field of battle a mountain of the dead and dying; Grant was at last in possession of that fortress of Vicksburg so long declared impregnable; the fall of Port Hudson was pronounced certain and imminent; Bragg's army, demoralised, was retreating before Rosencrantz, abandoning to the Federals Chattanooga and Knoxville, the keys

of the country; the defection of North Carolina appeared inevitable.

Immense was the commotion. President Lincoln seized upon the opportunity to enforce the Draft Law voted some months before by Congress. The moment seemed at hand when they were to sally forth to cut off the head of the Lernæan hydra.

It was all over with the democratic faction unless they attempted a supreme effort. The levy of 300,000 men was equivalent in all appearance to the decisive defeat of the South, and, the South once disarmed, the democrats as a party would lose the very law of their existence. They resolved to act without losing a single instant, and to sow disorder they reckoned upon the Irish element.

The number of Irishmen in New York is not less than 20,000. Thanks to that law of naturalisation which, in America, summons and absorbs all foreigners, these 20,000 Irishmen have a right to vote, and so far constitute a real power. The majority of them, however, are the scum of the population on the other side of the Atlantic, as on this. Ignorant, brutal, superstitious beings, hatred of the negro is one of the articles of their creed, and that for two reasons: the first is that they fear, in the emancipated negroes, inconvenient rivals in the labour market; the second, that seeing themselves on the lowest rung but one of the social ladder, they hold to having at least one class below them. As for the democrats, or, as they are called in America, the Copperheads, here was an army to their hand in this mob of Irishmen, half savages; and unfortunately the Conscription Law, by permitting to the rich the redemption of personal service for the consideration of 300 dollars, supplied only too serviceable a theme to the instigators of disorder. What! Every man who had not 300 dollars in his pocket was proclaimed food for powder, and that in order to finish a war to which the poor Irish were indebted for not having to contend against the competition of four millions of niggers! You may imagine how easy it was to fire the train.

The drawing of lots commenced on Saturday the 11th of July in the midst of a profound calm, but it was the calm that preludes the storm. And the storm burst forth on the following day but one. What ensued is known to all. It is known how the rioters protested against the law by incendiarism, plunder, and

cutting of throats, especially negroes' throats. But what is of importance to state publicly, and what must never be forgotten, is the conduct of Governor Seymour, haranguing the assassins, on the Tuesday, in his most persuasive tones, and calling them his "friends."

Now that the disturbance is suppressed and nothing remains of it but the disgrace, the democrats would fain have it believed that they had nothing to do with it. Too many circumstances, however, accuse them, to render it possible for them to shake off the responsibility of the bloodshed. Was not the cry "Jefferson Davis for ever!" heard mingling with the yells of the rioters? Did not all the houses that were attacked belong to the leaders of the Republican party?

The truth is, that the democrats have a considerable "party interest" in impeding the victory of the North. To the time of Lincoln's election, their understanding with the Southern delegates had secured their absolute pre-eminence, and it was necessary that the South should re-enter the Union by treating as one Power with another, if they were to have any chance of recovering the ascendency and of sharing among themselves the spoils —spoils that are not to be disdained by egotists and ambitious men in a country where the triumphant party makes a clean sweep of whatever does not belong to itself, on the very day after its installation, and distributes among its adherents all the government employments from the highest to the lowest.

From all this what are the conclusions to be drawn? They are twofold: first, that the riot at New York was instigated by the accomplices of the South in the North; and, secondly, that the rioters were recruited only from among individuals who are foreigners in the country. What is there in that for the English partisans of the South to turn to advantage?

That the conscription, engrafted upon the privilege of wealth, was calculated to discontent the Irish population, must in fairness be admitted; but the manifestation of this discontent in the form of ignoble rapine and the murder of so many innocent individuals is one of those spectacles which history regards with horror. The remembrance of it will remain for ever bound in an indissoluble manner to the cause defended by the friends of slavery, here and elsewhere.

LETTER CLXXXI.

A LETTER FROM THE QUEEN.

August 6th, 1863.

A curious question, and one that happens to be closely united with the theory of constitutional government, had been raised in England by the circumstance of a letter which the Queen has lately written, or, to speak more correctly, which an officer of her Majesty's household lately wrote in her name to the Mayor of Birmingham.

This letter refers to a deplorable accident that happened at Birmingham a few days ago. A Madame Geneive, a rope-dancer, had advertised herself as capable of renewing the prodigies of self-possession and agility which have made the fortune of Blondin. She even went so far as to adopt the name of "The Female Blondin." And, in fact, she appeared to be called to the same destinies as that King of Acrobats, whose exploits she imitated with a frightful fidelity.

Unfortunately, in this sort of defiance hurled at danger, neither extraordinary courage nor superhuman skill are sufficient guarantees for success. The acrobat does not depend solely upon himself—he depends upon the solidity of the rope upon which he moves. This has been too well proved by the sad fate of Madame Geneive. The rope, necessary instrument of her brilliant exercises, having snapped beneath her feet while she was marching forward with her head enveloped in the sack made famous by Blondin, nothing more need be said. It is horrible, however, to add—what shows the inhuman training given by such spectacles to the multitude—that at Birmingham, in the park in which this unfortunate creature paid with her life for the power she possessed of passionately moving curiosity, her tragical death did not for one moment interrupt the public merrymaking. Most horrible! People went on eating, drinking, and laughing round the spot stained with the blood of the poor broken human body!

It was on this occasion that the Queen commanded Sir C. B. Phipps to express to the Mayor of Birmingham the horror with

which she was seized at the recital of these mournful circumstances, and what she thought of the demoralising character presented, and degrading influence exercised, by exhibitions in which the pleasure experienced by the spectator is in exact proportion to the inherent danger of the spectacle.

Two days previously Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, had been questioned in Parliament as to the tolerance accorded to these odious entertainments, and had entrenched himself behind the "taste of the public." It is this taste of the public which the Queen has publicly stigmatised, and with a burst of indignation which will be appreciated by every upright heart united to an elevated understanding.

To every one who knows England and the English, this will appear a decisive act; and it may be predicted that, dating from this day, the abuse denounced from on high is dead, without any intervention of law. And do you know why? Simply because henceforth it will never more be "fashionable" to go to see to what measures certain individuals have recourse in order to risk their lives. What man belonging to polished society, what woman pluming herself on her elegance, would have the audacity to run after a species of entertainment which the Queen has declared to be immoral and, what in the eyes of certain folks is still more important, in bad taste? The aristocracy, therefore, will hold themselves aloof; people of the middle class will do the same from imitation, not to appear deficient in good tone; and as for the rest of the population, the sort of monarchical superstition to whose sway it submits, answers for its acquiescence in a verdict rendered by the sovereign.

Under this head no one questions that the letter alluded to is deserving of all praise. Viewed from the effect it is certainly calculated to produce, who would venture to express a regret, or rather, by whom could any feeling of regret be experienced? The attraction felt by the English for spectacles which exhibit a man, or even a woman, making a livelihood out of the danger of death, is one of the things of which they have the least reason to be proud. If Spain has its bull-fights—England has, what is certainly no better, its prize-fights, brutal contests, always terrible, sometimes mortal, and which nevertheless excite an universal interest verging on delirium. Quite recently a pugilist was knocked down by a blow like that of a club; when picked up, he was dead. Those who had been clever enough to bet on the

conqueror fairly won their money, as you see! Such instances, I admit, are rare; but is there ever a prize-fight in which blood does not flow? Well might Jean-Jacques Rousseau exclaim in such a case, "Eh! what do you want to do with this blood, ferocious brute? Do you want to drink it?"

The English are a people essentially humane, as is sufficiently proved by their laws for the protection of animals. We may, therefore, regard not merely as one of their contradictions, but rather as one of their national diseases, the pleasure which they experience in spectacles which humanity disowns, and for which civilisation blushes.

Under this head, I repeat, there is nothing which is not very praiseworthy in the inspiration that dictated the Queen's letter to the Mayor of Birmingham.

But, as I said at the commencement, the fact of the Queen's letter raises a grave question not exactly as to constitutional right, but as to constitutional practice.

In a system which rests upon the irresponsibility of the royal power, and which starts from the supposition artificially raised to a principle, that "the king can do no wrong," is there no inconvenience in allowing royalty to cast into the scale of public opinion the weight of its approbation or disapprobation, expressed in a striking and peremptory manner?

And ought not this inconvenience to be especially taken into consideration in a country where aristocratic habits, the dictatorship of what is called *bon ton*, the power of example set by the great, and the spirit of imitation which is maintained among a lower order through vanity, assure to any ideas which from the throne descend to fashionable circles, and from these to shops, and from shops to workshops, a social influence that is almost irresistible? Such is the question many very right-minded persons are asking one another, and the last number of the *Spectator* contains on this subject an article well worth some reflection. "The Queen," it says, "was, doubtless, as much affected by the death of Mary Ann Walkley as by that of Mme. Geneive; but two lines of condemnation coming from her and signed by Sir C. Phipps, would have irretrievably ruined Mme. Elise, and perhaps changed the course of an important trade."

The fact is, that the exercise of great power must be judged, not from the good effect which results from it in a given case, but according to the consequences which might flow from it, if it

ceased to be guided by upright intentions or a sound appreciation of circumstances. May not the abuse, which is not to be feared from the present Queen, be an object of fear on the part of any of her successors? Who knows? Who can be authorised to answer for it? Precedents are things which must not be looked at from too near a point. The rigorous consequence of irresponsibility would be inaction. In order that, logically, the king should be able to do no wrong, it would be necessary—human nature being what it is—that the king should do absolutely nothing.

If, therefore, in a constitutional system, the royal power acts at all, it is of importance that, in any case, it should act as little as possible. With what power, however, would not royalty be invested, if it were optional with it to exercise its prestige, whenever it pleased, in a country so profoundly aristocratic and monarchical as England?

That the danger should have been sighted, proves how much good sense there is in this country; that it should have been signalled, proves how free are the people.

LETTER CLXXXII.

A WARNING GIVEN TO THE ENGLISH.

August 7th, 1863.

I HAVE heard many a political personage here express the opinion that the pamphlet published by M. Dentu under this title: *L'Empereur, la Pologne, et l'Europe*, was written for England's benefit, if it be true, as it is asserted, that it is from the pen of M. Mocquard.

It is true that the superscription of the letter is addressed to St. Petersburg and Berlin, but it is to the contents we must look.

Supposing, as is probable, that Napoleon does not care to engage single-handed in a war against Russia, and is desirous to drag England in after him, what steps would he have to take to bring her round to his designs? He would have to disquiet her as much as possible as to the consequences of the armed isolation of France. Well, this is precisely what the author of the pamphlet in question seems to have had in view.

Not that the hypothesis of the armed isolation of France is the subject brought forward into the light. No; the object aimed at would, in that case, have been too manifest; and the threat would risk failing in its effect, if it were too direct.

Accordingly there is talk of an Anglo-Franco-Swedish fleet that might one fine day appear in the Baltic, and of another Anglo-Franco-Italian fleet that might one fine day appear in the Black Sea—things which refer to the idea of a combined action. But wait a little! Why is the King of Prussia taken so warmly to task in this pamphlet? Why is he recommended not to forget the lessons of history, and not to hurry forward, across a second battle of Jena, to a second battle of Friedland? Why is the memory evoked of the terrible misfortunes Prussia brought down upon herself by changing Napoleon's good-will towards her into wrath? Why is it added that France, once her sword is unsheathed, will deem herself bound to deliver Lithuania as she delivered Lombardy? It is perfectly well known at the Tuileries that the great fear of the English is to see Prussia mixed up with this business, because if Prussia supports the Russians in arms the Imperial eagle will spread its wings over the Rhine. It is also very well known at the Tuileries that the regeneration of *ancient* Poland is not at all likely to tempt England, for whom the treaties of 1815, faithfully observed, constitute the extreme limit of intervention.

To recall, therefore, victories, conquests, acts of vengeance, the very image of which causes the English to shudder, is much the same as saying to them: "If, in the event of war breaking out, you refuse to join us—be it so. Only in that case you must expect that we shall make war, not according to your views, but according to our own; not as you understand it but as we understand it. We, for our part, have no respect for the treaties of 1815, which we abhor on the contrary, and which we have already begun to tear up with the points of our bayonets. What we want is, Poland restored without reference to those treaties, and in such a manner that there shall be another France on the banks of the Vistula. Prussia will say nay to this—at least, we hope so. Napoleon found the Rhine good to take; he took it; we, too, call ourselves the Empire."

It would be difficult to place more adroitly before the eyes of England the immense inconveniences which, so far as she is concerned, might attend the armed isolation of France. It

would be difficult to suggest to her a more powerful motive for entering, sword in hand if necessary, upon a common action. Is that the object of the pamphlet? I repeat, such is the opinion of persons well versed in political strategy.

It is certain that the danger of suffering France to act alone, in the event of war, seems to have powerfully struck some important organs of the English press. This danger was pointed out yesterday by the *Morning Post* in an article which reproached the *Times* with slumbering with beatific tranquillity in the policy of abstention at all costs. And this article is the more worthy of note that the *Morning Post* is Lord Palmerston's journal.

As to the rest, it is not to-day for the first time that the Head of the Cabinet is suspected of holding opinions on the Polish question different from those represented and expressed by Lord Russell. Not more than the latter would the former, I fancy, desire a war with Russia; but if Napoleon were to draw the sword and fling away the scabbard, Lord Palmerston, perhaps, would not be equally ready with Lord Russell to look on, and might prefer to an abstention that would leave the field open to imperial ambition, an armed alliance which would at least give England a right to check and hold him in.

LETTER CLXXXIII.

THE SEPARATE ACTION.

August 10th, 1863.

Thanks to the electric telegraph, the nineteenth century may be known in history as the age of *gobemouches*.

What contradictory news are swallowed every day, every hour! And what an insatiable craving is exhibited by public curiosity to be fed at any price, if only by tales that send one asleep standing. Grimm tells us that Baron d'Holbach, that great sceptic, was as credulous as a child in little things, and greedy of news to such a degree that that passion absorbed in him all others. If Grimm spoke the truth, the worthy baron ought to have contrived to live in the present age: by coming into the world when he did, he made a mistake of the date.

An amusing book might be made of all the contradictory rumours to which the Polish question daily gives rise.

A week ago a French journal which is supposed to frequent the greenroom of the theatre in which is played the comedy of history, pompously affirmed that the three intervening Powers were about to address notes of an *analogous* character to Russia. On the other hand, the *Mémorial Diplomatique* asserted that the project of a *collective* and *identical* note had been adopted—which was believed for twenty-four hours.

On the morrow, the scene shifted. It was semi-officially announced that England would have nothing to do with an *identical* note, but would write to the Czar with ink taken out of her own inkstand. Very good. On the day after that, it was all different. *Well-informed* persons assured us that we might count upon the inestimable advantages of a *combined action*. This was denied on the following day, then re-affirmed, and after that again denied.

To-day the most accredited version, and which, this time, appears to be the right one, is that the attempts made by M. Drouyn de Lhuys to establish a *combined action*, have terminated in what is called in England "a failure;" that the English choose to speak to Russia a language which is their own, and not another's, in order to remain free to act as they please—that is, not to act at all; that *separate* notes have conveyed to St. Petersburg the very encouraging assurance that a real understanding between the three Powers did not exist, or existed only within a very narrow circle; and lastly, that Russia holds a pen in one hand, and a sword in the other.

But what about that reply of Prince Gortschakoff to M. Drouyn de Lhuys, which the *Journal des Debats* announced as the dawn of conciliation and peace? Another dish served up to the credulity of the *gobemouches*. This reply is at last known, and this is its amiable conclusion: "Our task would be difficult were France to overlook the necessities imposed upon us by national sentiments associated with the traditions and vital interests of the country," which signifies, when freely translated: "Do not irritate beyond all bounds that bear which, according to Mme. de Stael, one is always sure to find in scratching a Russian. He is already quite angry enough, and it would not rest with us to hold him in. As for the question of knowing who will be the victor, that is matter of opinion. So far as

traditions go, we have that of Moscow in flames when the *vital interests* of the country required it; and the conflagration, if we rightly remember, served us not badly against Napoleon, who was at least quite equal to yourself."

Here we are, then, once more plunged into obscurity. Russia takes a high hand. M. Drouyn de Lhuys holds firm for the policy of a combined action as the only means of bringing Russia to reason. But England has no idea of entangling herself in a combined action; neither has Austria, because neither England nor Austria cares to draw out of the fire the chestnuts for France to eat. What will be the issue from this imbroglio? The arena is again opened to all sorts of rumours and counter-rumours, of suppositions and counter-suppositions, until the Sphinx of the Tuileries deigns to speak, or, what comes to the same thing, until the semi-official French press speaks in its place.

In the meantime, every interest is endamaged, every mind disquieted; nor can the hypothesis of to-day convict of falsehood the hypothesis of yesterday, certain of being convicted of falsehood by the hypothesis of to-morrow, without there resulting a great trouble and uneasiness in business.

What astonishes me is, that amidst the unbounded gossiping which rises out of the uncertainties of the situation, the hopes of some, the fears of others, the chances of peace, the chances of war, and so forth, there should be so little space allowed for this simple question: "But what do the Poles themselves think of the intervention of the Powers?"

Is it not somewhat strange that those who give so much thought to what others desire for or against Poland, should give so little thought to what Poland herself desires or rejects.

Several English journals have published a manifesto, said to emanate from the mysterious government which for the present directs the efforts of the insurrection. It states: "The National Government will remain deaf to every voice that shall cry to it to lay down its arms before the accomplishment of its final object, the reconstitution of Poland within the boundaries of 1772. There is no Poland without Lithuania and the Russias, an indivisible trinity." What can be imagined more decisively opposed to the European intervention, whose starting point is the treaties of 1815, and which aims at the acceptance by Russia of the six points? In his last reply to M. Drouyn de Lhuys, Prince Gortschakoff observed: "If the Russian Government

did not repudiate bad faith and evasive subterfuges, it might perhaps have displayed some tact in accepting the six points categorically." No doubt; for what would then have happened? The acceptance of the six points, instead of being *imposed* by the intervening Powers upon Russia, must have been *imposed* by them upon Poland, so that diplomacy would have found itself —a position at once ridiculous and hateful—in the logical necessity of treating those it protected as adversaries, and of combating their aspirations to independence, after having solemnly proclaimed the rightfulness thereof!

That the above-mentioned proclamation is authentic is beyond my power to affirm, but it has certainly been published as such; and what is not less certain is, that in any case it expresses with tragical precision the genuine sentiments of the Poles. On that head there is no possible doubt. A month ago I had a conversation with an accredited agent in London of the Polish insurrection, in which he justified the aversion of his compatriots for any sort of intervention, whether diplomatic or armed, on the part of the despotic governments, by arguments which made a great impression upon me. More recently, at the meeting in St. James's Hall, Prince Zamoyski expressed himself on the same subject in very peremptory terms: "All that we ask," he said, "is that Europe should declare that Russia has no rights over Poland."

The Polish patriots want nothing more, nor less. They feel instinctively that they have nothing good to expect from an intervention which would, perchance, cost their liberty whatever it gave towards their independence.

LETTER CLXXXIV.

RUSSIAN INTERESTS SERVED BY THE OSCILLATIONS OF ENGLISH POLICY.

August 11th, 1863.

Everybody knows that Russian diplomacy is the first diplomacy in the world.

As has been observed by a modern historian, the Russian nobles, from the fact that they have no part—except in the

official sphere—in the conduct of the internal policy of their country, direct towards its foreign policy their attention, their thoughts, their efforts, while the State, favouring this tendency, impresses on the diplomatic service an activity everywhere else unknown. There is scarcely a single distinguished Russian who does not, while on his travels, serve the designs of Russia, either by means of the information which he is commissioned to collect, or of the ideas which he takes upon himself the duty of diffusing.

It thence results that, of all the sciences, diplomacy is the one which in Russia is cultivated with the greatest diligence and success. As it demands that there should be a definite object in view, that a steady advance should be made towards it without once losing sight of it, and that everything should be referred to the desire of attaining it, Russian policy is distinguished by a persistency which is without a parallel in the history of any other country.

There is, I admit, in England, as in all aristocratic countries, a "school of statesmen," but this school is always divided into two rival branches, each of which has its own traditions to follow, its own tendencies to prosecute. Besides, the institutions and manners of a free people naturally give rise to fluctuations of opinion little compatible with that unity of conception and execution which characterises the policy of St. Petersburg, and converts every Russian minister into an executor of Peter the Great's Testament.

Again, it is in the nature of the English people, who distrust theories in all things, to allow themselves to be absorbed by the interests of the moment, without troubling themselves about remote consequences, and to turn to what is most urgent, even though it should compel them to change their route.

Accordingly, the inefficiency of English diplomacy, its oscillations and contradictions, contrast very strikingly with the logical development of Russian diplomacy, especially in the mutual relations of the two countries.

Such, if I mistake not, is the best answer to make to the question put by many a writer at this juncture:—How comes it that in the Polish question, with France by her side, and sharing the sympathies of France for Poland, England hesitates and draws back, without even waiting until she is constrained to do so?

I am well aware that England distrusts us, and fears us; and, besides, it is only fair to admit that she has not such an impe-

rious heart-interest, nor such a considerable and manifest material interest as France, in the salvation of Poland.

Poland has never fought under her flag, never mingled her blood with that of the English on every battle-field in Europe; nor would reconstituted Poland be another England on the banks of the Vistula. All this must be fairly admitted. And yet there was no exaggeration in the assertion made by *la France* newspaper the other day, that, of the three intervening Powers, the one most interested in getting up a European coalition against Russia, was England.

It is undeniable that England chiefly lives through her expansion outwards, and that she encounters Russia as an obstacle in China, in India, in America, everywhere.

It is equally true that at certain periods she appears to have had a keen sense of her danger. Hence the anxious solicitude she has on several occasions displayed for the preservation of the Ottoman empire. Hence her eagerness to uphold the authority of the Sultan, now against the Bulgarians, at another time against the Servians, and at another against the Hellenes of Thessaly. Hence, too, the ardour with which she plunged into the hazards of the Crimean war—a war which she burned to prosecute after the fall of Sebastopol, and which she certainly would have followed up had not Napoleon III., to her great surprise and regret, suddenly exclaimed, "Enough!"

But what the policy of England in relation to Russia has always been, and still is, deficient in, is in persistency. Let us meditate on the picture of the faults of the Foreign Office sketched by Lord Ponsonby, a little before his death, in the following memorandum addressed to the Queen.

In 1791 the Cabinet of St. James's having resolved to oppose the encroachments of Russia in the Black Sea, fitted out a fleet to attack the Russians in the Baltic. Mr. Fox encouraged the Empress in her designs, and Mr. Pitt abandoned the policy which he had thought it his duty to adopt.

In 1806 the differences which existed between England and France having been smoothed away, Russia demanded for herself the cession of Moldavia and Wallachia. This demand was presented by England, and in consequence of the refusal of France the two countries and all Europe were once more plunged into the horrors of war. Russia entered the Principalities, under the pretext of protecting them against France; and England, who

was at peace with Turkey, sent a squadron to force the Dardanelles and bombard Constantinople, in order to force the Turks to make the above-mentioned cession to Russia, give up to herself the Dardanelles, and declare war against France.

In 1812, on the occasion of the invasion of Russia by France, at which time Turkey could have recovered the provinces which had been wrested from her, a treaty was signed, through the mediation of England, by which Russia acquired Bessarabia.

In 1814—15, at the Congress of Vienna, Bessarabia did not form part of the territories which, occupied during the war, were to be restored, and Turkey was deliberately excluded from the benefit of the measures of separation, and from the general principle of guarantee stipulated in those treaties.

In 1821, at the time of the Greek insurrection, and of the rupture between Turkey and Russia, a rupture brought about by the perfidy of the latter Power, it was England who acted as the agent of Russia at Constantinople.

In 1826, as a sequence to the Convention of Akkerman, which Russia obtained by engaging never again to intervene in the affairs of Greece, a secret protocol was signed between Russia and England with a direct view to such intervention, but without any idea of coercive measures. The following year, however, an English squadron, supported by a French and a Russian squadron, annihilated the Turkish navy at Navarino.

In 1828 the English Government invited the Pasha of Egypt to declare himself independent.

In 1829 Lord Aberdeen expressed to the Russian Ambassadors his good wishes for the success of the Russian arms, and acted up to his words. In the same year the Treaty of Adrianople, containing cessions both of influence and of territory, in violation of the original contract between Russia and England, was imposed upon the Porte by the English Ambassador, and that at a time when a few weeks more would have completed the destruction of all that remained of the Russian forces.

In 1831, on the occasion of the insurrection of Poland, Turkey, moved by a sentiment she shared with Persia, Sweden, France, and Austria, prepared to support the Poles. It was England who paralysed her action.

In 1833, when Mohammed-Ali invaded the Ottoman Empire, the Sultan applied to England for protection, who refused it, but urged Russia to grant it. In the following year England threat-

ened Turkey, because of the Treaty the Porte had been compelled to sign with the Russians, as the price of the assistance so rendered.

In 1838 a treaty of commerce was imposed upon the Porte, which placed a very high export duty upon all articles of Turkish produce competing with the products of Russia.

In 1840, on the occasion of a new invasion by Mohammed-Ali, England signed a treaty with Russia for the defence of Constantinople and the Sultan by the Russian arms.

In 1841 she signed another treaty which excluded her own ships from the Black Sea, and deprived the Sultan of his right of sovereignty over that sea.

In 1843, in consequence of a revolution in Servia, the English Government recognised the validity of the Treaty of Adrianople, and declared that Russia might interpret it as she pleased.

In 1844, the English Minister accepted from Count Nesselrode a memorandum of verbal communications relating to the manner in which Turkey was to be finally disposed of, and kept the secret.

In 1849 England refused her support to the Porte against a treaty which Russia was imposing, and which had for its object a collective occupation of the Danubian Principalities for eight years.

In 1852 England refused to back up Turkey, who was obliged to dismiss her Minister for Foreign Affairs and also the Servian Minister.

In 1853 she declined to support the Sultan against the invasion of the Danubian Principalities by Russia. The same year she obtained admittance into the closed waters of Turkey for a naval force calculated to place in peril the independence of the Ottoman Empire.

And during this long space of time the English Government never ceased to protest its profound solicitude for the prosperity of Turkey, esteeming her independence as the most serious of England's interests beyond her own shores!

Is there not something very strange in all this? And what is to be said of the Crimean war ending, so far as England is concerned, in the abandonment of that right of search for the destruction of which Russia so long had sighed? And what is to be said of that memorable sitting of the 29th of May last, when the House of Commons, by the mouth of all its speakers, con-

demned to death the Turkish Empire, and so gave their moral complement to the material results of that victory of Navarino, which England was so exceedingly kind as to gain for the benefit of Russia?

There is no room, therefore, for astonishment if, in the Polish question, the English Government exhibits the same blindness that was evinced by the foregoing facts. There is no room for wonder if, without its will or knowledge, it serves the interests of Russia, by intervening in a manner that deprives its intervention of all efficiency, and by declaring beforehand, to those whom it threatens, its firm resolution not to execute those threats; by only lending itself to a combined action to such an extent as to paralyse at once combined action and separate action; by assigning as a basis for negotiation the treaty of 1815, which Poland abhors, which Poland is bound to reject, and which she does reject.

Do you remember what I said not long ago about the immense interest which Russia had, to accept the question in the very terms in which it was enunciated by the diplomacy of the three Courts? Do you remember the apprehension I expressed lest Russia, by the pure and simple acceptance of the six points, should *put the Poles in the wrong in the eyes of Europe*, and in the name of common sense should compel the intervening Powers to assume the character of adversaries of their own clients? I then little expected to read, in a despatch of Prince Gortschakoff, a complete confirmation of the justness of so sad an appreciation of the circumstances. This confirmation lies in the following passage, which leaves nothing to be desired in the way of lucidity:—

"If the imperial cabinet did not repudiate from its political traditions bad faith and evasive subterfuges, there would perhaps be some cleverness on its part in categorically accepting the six points, so as to throw upon the insurgents the responsibility of their rejection, in the eyes of the Powers who support them."

Without doubt, that would have been very clever; and it is not a little amusing that the Powers at strife with Russia should have reason to be grateful to Russia for her chivalrous repugnance to avail herself of these advantages! What a condemnation, at the same time mournful and ridiculous, of that policy of the six points, the *ne plus ultra* of diplomatic sagacity, according to Lord Russell.

LETTER CLXXXV.

THE NEWS OF THE CAPTURE OF NANA SAHIB.

August 16th, 1863.

However paradoxical the assertion may appear, the capture of Nana Sahib which has caused so much joy in England, without it being yet known if the news be true,* ought, on the contrary, considering the circumstances which preceded it, to awaken serious anxiety.

What has happened, in fact, if this news be true?

The master of Bithoor, the adopted son of the ex-Peishwah of Poona, the implacable author of the massacre of Cawnpoor, the most terrible enemy the English Power has ever encountered in India, the barbarian whose name is never pronounced by Anglo-Indians without a shudder,—Nana Sahib, in short, had disappeared from the scene six years ago, but only in the eyes of the English. Yes, while they believed he was dead, and shaking off in Hell the fumes of the blood with which he had intoxicated himself, or at least dragging on far away, in some inaccessible asylum, the remnants of a life filled with dread, he was still living for conspiracies and vengeance. Far from courting solitude and darkness, he was traversing the kingdom of Nepaul, the kingdom of Oude, the States of the Maharajah of Gwalior, he was going even to Poona to see what the vigilance of the English, stimulated by hatred, could do against him. Far from being in distress for food and a roof to cover him, he carried with him a store of jewels and rupees. Far from being absorbed in precautions to save his life, he was engaged in re-assembling the elements of a second revolt against "the yellow-faced and narrow-hearted people." He seems to have been captured by some Bombay officers in the very capital of Ajmere.

And for six years he has been able after this fashion to wander over India, hold communications, so it is said, with Indian princes, organise a corps of fugitive sepoys, stir up the ashes of civil war, without a single voice having denounced him, without a secret, necessarily known to so many, having been betrayed.

To conceal oneself so long from the pursuit of an inexorable

* It afterwards proved to be false.

enemy, when that enemy means a great people, and the fugitive is but a single man, is everywhere a difficult feat; but, as the *Spectator* justly observes, it is particularly difficult in India, because of the working of the system of castes. In that country when a native makes his appearance at a place where he is unknown, "he will get nothing to eat, or to drink, or to shelter himself under, until he has undergone, on the part of other natives, a rigorous examination touching his caste, his birth, his rank, his family, his habitual residence, his right to bear his own name." If, then, Nana Sahib has succeeded, since the suppression of the Sepoy revolt down to the present time, in baffling all pursuit, though a price was set upon his head, and though never was wild beast more keenly tracked by mightier hunters, there is only one possible explanation of a circumstance so extraordinary. It is the ardent sympathy of the native population that has served him as a rampart, as it serves in Ireland to the tenant who murders his landlord, and as, not long ago, in Corsica, it served any individual condemned by a craving to avenge his outraged family to the destitution and dangers of a bandit's life.

That in order to avoid death by hanging, and the loss in the next world of his privileges as a Brahmin, by suffering himself to be polluted by the touch of impious hands, Nana Sahib may one day have conceived the idea of dying a fictitious death ; that he may accordingly have cut off a portion of his little finger, that he may have burnt it upon a funeral pyre with all customary formalities, and that his wives, without further questions, may have shaved their heads and donned the white robes of widowhood—such a tale contains nothing incompatible with Eastern manners. However this may be, it was certainly reported in England that Nana Sahib had died in the kingdom of Nepaul, where he had sought an asylum, and that after his funeral rites had been performed, his property was distributed among his followers, who then dispersed, and his ashes conveyed to the sacred river. But whether or not, in the rumour circulated to the above effect, we see nothing more than a cunning device of a thoroughly Oriental character, suggested by the love of life, the fact remains that in Nana Sahib's bosom the love of life—as is proved by the papers said to have been found upon his person at the time of his capture—has never for an instant ceased to be united to an indomitable desire to re-kindle the great conflagration of 1857.

Another point, not to be lightly regarded by the English, is the

marvellous, the fanatical self-sacrifice of those wandering fakirs who, when stopped and taken for the fugitive, so carefully abstained from saying anything of a nature to clear up the mistake; on the contrary, doing all in their power to keep it up, and disappointed that the discovery of the truth deprived them of the happiness of dying in the place of the most cruel enemy of the invaders of India!

The *Spectator*, already quoted, remarks that, without being either a general or a statesman, Nana Sahib was a danger for England, because he had a title to the attachment and confidence of his followers which, in the East, is superior to all others—he could not betray them, even if he were base enough, or desirous to do so. Between himself and the English what compromise was possible after the carnage at Cawnpoor? One of two things must happen, either that he should be crushed like a venomous insect, or that the domination of England in India should be extirpated. He had gone too far, with his feet steeped in English gore, for it to be ever optional with him to draw back, and he must know that, sooner or later, their vengeance would overtake him, were he concealed in the bowels of the earth. There was thus in India, while he lived, a man interested in raising his audacity to the level of his danger, and that man was the one who had already struck at the edifice of the English rule in those remote regions the most formidable blow it had ever received from the hand of a native chief since the time of that Hyder Ali, who assumed the title of "King of the Indian Seas."

Looked at from this point of view, it cannot be doubted that the capture of Nana Sahib is an event over which England has reason to rejoice; but she would do well to reflect seriously upon the combination of circumstances with which this event is connected. They prove that, in India, the hatred which is conceived in the bosom of the native population is profound, that fire is ever smouldering beneath the ashes, and that it is of some moment to guard against illusions.

Judging merely from the exterior aspect of things, all is going on admirably. Does not the presence of an army of 70,000 whites answer for the submission of the conquered race? Is not the Indian revenue in a singularly prosperous condition? Is not money invested in the Indian Loans with an eagerness not to be discouraged either by the high premium or the fear of early repayment? Have there not been constructed, within a

dozen years, in those regions where the genius of immensity is one of the enemies to be vanquished, 2200 miles of railway; and in a few months will not the distance between Calcutta and Bombay be traversed in four days?

All that is undeniable. But that does not prevent England, in India, from partly resting upon bayonets—a situation characterised by Prince Schwartzenberg as impossible—and, what is still more perilous, upon the bayonets of a people whom she has vanquished but never assimilated.

It is no longer pretended that the epic insurrection of 1857 was the ephemeral result of a purely accidental circumstance—of the idea circulated among the sepoys that their cartridges had been rubbed with sacriligious grease, by touching which they would incur the irreparable misfortune of being degraded from their caste. The reason why the revolt was so terrible, whatever people may choose to say, was because it had a national character; because between the Brahmins who, according to the Indian faith, proceeded from the head of the deity—the Kshatriyas, who issued from his chest—the Vaisyas, who came out from his thighs—and the Sudras, who sprang from his feet, there was in common, in addition to the fanaticism of caste, an inveterate hatred towards the foreigners, their masters, and a hatred founded upon just grievances.

This is what England ought to take into serious consideration. She has arms, it is true, which can reach, across oceans and their subjugated depths, to the extremities of the earth; and the Indians, were they to attempt a second revolt, would never be for her but a timid flock ready to disperse at the first movement of her brazen crook; but force does not suffice for the preservation of honour. Every conquest that does not win forgiveness from the conquered people by bestowing upon it a large portion of knowledge and happiness is a robbery, and continues to be a robbery until that result is effected.

If the capture of Nana Sahib induces the English to apply themselves somewhat more actively to drying up the source of the animosities, which for an instant rendered him powerful, even against powerful England, that capture will not have been in vain.

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